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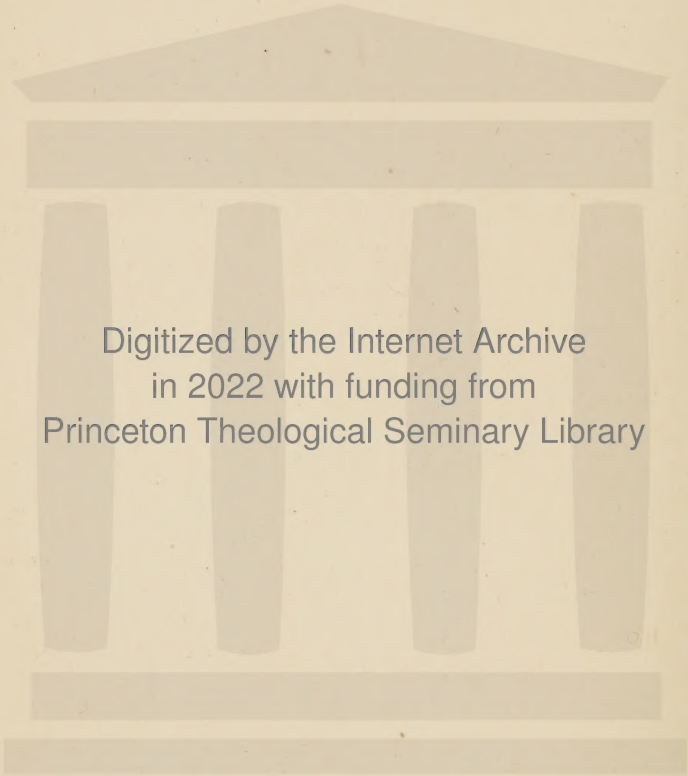
THE CHRISTIAN'S PLEA

AGAINST

MODERN UNBELIEF.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THE CHRISTIAN'S PLEA

AGAINST

MODERN UNBELIEF:

A

Handbook of Christian Evidence.

BY

R. A. REDFORD, M.A., LL.B.,

PROFESSOR OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY AND APOLOGETICS, NEW COLLEGE, LONDON.

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PREFACE.

A WANT has been long felt of a Handbook, which should put together the arguments for Christianity, more especially those which meet modern doubt, in a systematic and complete form. The total impression of a wide range of evidence will be increased by being drawn together within a smaller space. The relative value of arguments, and their concurrent force, will thus be better appreciated.

This work has been prepared at the request of the Christian Evidence Society. The author, however, takes solely upon himself the responsibility of both the matter and form; the Society having had no share in the preparation of the work beyond concurring in the general scheme of method which the writer has followed.

In the course of publication, the order of the last two chapters of the argument has been changed; and some pages have been omitted, to reduce the size of the work.

May the Spirit of truth, who helpeth our infirmities, make up out of His fulness, all the deficiencies of the work; and may the blessing of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ attend its perusal.

PUTNEY, *March 31st*, 1881.

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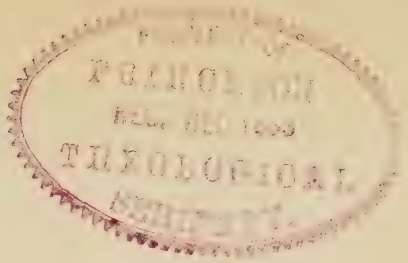

PART I.

INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

SUMMARY OF THE FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

A HANDBOOK of Christian Evidence has a practical rather than a theoretical end in view. It must, by the necessities of the case, be succinct; and it ought to be comprehensive. It cannot therefore be exhaustive; and it should not be diffuse. There have been periods in the history of Christianity, as, *e.g.*, during the reign of ecclesiastical authority, in the middle ages, when an argumentative defence of Christian doctrine was rather the employment of learned leisure than the demand of an agitated Christendom. But when the assaults upon faith have been direct, when they have been manifold and varied, as they now are, it has been incumbent upon the friends of truth to look well to their armour and sharpen their weapons. At such times ready resources and careful preparation should be furnished by the few to the many; and a *Handbook* will be serviceable in meeting wants which are felt pressing in actual life.

At the outset, it is of the first importance to remark, as will be more fully shown in the sequel, that "*Christian Evidence*" is not the *scientific demonstration of abstract truth.* It deals with a system of *moral* and *religious* truths and facts which make their appeal, at the same time, to the intellect, to the

heart, and to the life. *Demonstration*, in the strict sense of the word, is not the ultimate aim of the Christian apologist. In the lower sense, of proof which is *morally certain* and which brings the obligation of practical conviction to the mind, demonstration is possible; but not as though the primary conceptions of the Christian thinker could be scientifically defined. A well-ordered array of evidences, each of which falls short of irresistible *demonstration*, may yet produce *a cumulative effect* which is of incalculable weight and force. The aggregation of argumentative materials is a preparation for more elaborate defence. While to many, perhaps, the labour of a prolonged and profound study of such a subject is too great to be encountered, a survey of the whole, even though rapid and cursory, will facilitate inquiry and strengthen confidence. The aim of this work, therefore, which is to meet a practical requirement, will justify the narrow limits within which the subjects contained in it are treated, and the simplicity of its method.

Christianity is a structure of mingled *historical facts* and *moral and religious truths*. The Christian religion stands upon a basis, like all other religions, of *primary belief*. But it is impossible to separate the distinctively *Christian* elements from those which, while they may appear elsewhere, have, in the Christian system, their special significance. It is not correct to say that the doctrines and facts which distinguish Christianity rest upon a foundation of "*natural religion*," *i.e.*, in such a sense that they are only *supplementary* to it. Rather they are the necessary *complement* to that which can be learnt from "the constitution and course of the world." They are the true manifestation of the mind and will of the Creator. The revelation which claims acknowledgment in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament takes up into itself all other revelations as subordinate and preparatory, leading on to that which does not, properly speaking, *supersede* them, but explains, fulfils, and glorifies them. This may be illustrated by the analogy of the development of the individual human being. Manhood is neither a mere *supplement* to childhood, nor is it

a mere *outcome* of that which was already given in early life. We explain the child by the man, and not the man by the child. We understand God's revelation in the physical universe and in the human mind and conscience only when we look into the face of "*God manifest in the flesh.*" To attempt to read any of the volumes of Divine truth apart, as though they were absolutely complete in themselves, is to miss their unity and to mar their meaning.

At the same time, in undertaking the defence of Christianity as a system of truth and fact, it is absolutely necessary that we should map out, to a certain extent, *the regions of argument.* They have been treated separately by able writers, partly because their vast *extent* has necessitated some kind of division, and partly because the value of different portions of the evidence has been variously estimated. We shall not here discuss the wisdom of this method. In a work which is intended to summarize the results of the labours of others rather than to set forth a new system of argument, it would be irrelevant to criticise the past. The *Theistic element* of Christianity has been treated on the ground of natural, logical, and moral evidence, as separable from the distinctive doctrines of the Christian faith. The *Authority of Scripture* has been argued apart from any interpretation of its contents. The *Divine Origin of Christianity* may be asserted on historical as well as upon moral grounds. These divisions are not only permissible but helpful. They contribute fulness and variety to the argument. The mind which will freely enter the *adytum* of *Theism* may shrink back from the *inner sanctuary* of Christian *miracles and prophecy.* The *external* evidence will sometimes produce conviction while the *internal* evidence remains unappreciated. Like travellers passing through various regions, and being variously affected on the way, having reached the *end of the journey*, the retrospect is an unbroken and restful assurance.

While Christianity must be defended on all sides, and as a whole system of truth, yet it must be admitted that in all Christian faith there are certain primary catholic elements,

which may be regarded both as fundamental in their relation to the rest of the Christian system and as the most prominent objects of attack and defence. Around them the main stress of battle is gathered. They are strongholds which must be defended with the utmost vigilance and effort. As matters of faith, they are not, perhaps, most often in the Christian's thought; but they are the main gateways, through which if unbelief finds entrance at all, the citadel of faith is lost. These primary Christian truths it will be necessary briefly to describe before entering upon the more detailed arguments in each department. We may enumerate them under the following heads, explaining the relation of each to the faith of a Christian as a whole:—I. *The Personality of God.* II. *The Free, Responsible, Moral Nature of Man as a Spiritual Being.* III. *The Future Life and the Individual Immortality of Man.* IV. *The Reality of Sin and the Moral Necessity of Redemption.* V. *The Agency of the Divine Spirit*, both in the soul and in society.

I. *The Personality of God.* Religion, however we define it, presupposes an *object of worship.* Christianity rejects all other conceptions of religion than that which regards a *personal God* as its object. It is distinguished, on the one side, from all forms of *polytheism*, which is in fact the worship of the creature instead of the Creator, of a finite object instead of an infinite Being; and, on the other side, from all *pantheistic* forms of so-called religion, which reduce the positive worship of a living person to a vague sentiment, dependent upon an intellectual conception, and therefore altogether unsuited to be made the universal worship of the human race. It is a startling fact, and yet one which we must not ignore, that *the existence of a personal God is denied.* It is denied not only as *incomprehensible* and incapable of absolute *demonstration*, but as contradicted by the evidence of scientific observation and irreconcilable with the laws of reason. Yet if there is no personal God, from whom all things have originated, and in whom all things consist, it is impossible to believe, in any true sense, the *person-*

ality of man; therefore the foundation is gone of moral truth, and the sphere of all religion. This is not the place for the full discussion of such a denial. Generally speaking it is only when the mind has already passed through antecedent stages of doubt, and prepared itself to follow to the very uttermost the processes of its thought and the daring demand of a knowledge which can be measured by itself, that it ventures upon a positive denial of what is, practically, a universal belief of man. By *Atheism* is frequently meant nothing more than a rejection of the *Christian* point of view, that there is a living and free Intelligence at the centre of the universe. There is no necessity, says the objector to Christianity, to formulate the *ultimate principle of things. Man* is in the universe, and he knows nothing but that which his faculties can grasp. Beyond the limits of his knowledge he has no sphere of thought, and therefore no object of reverence. His religion must be within the limits of his knowledge, therefore it must be the worship of himself and the reverential cultivation of the nature and life of the human race. Now it will be evident that we must find for Christianity a more substantial religious basis than this. We cannot preach a doctrine of Revelation, we cannot proclaim the fact that a revelation was given to the world, at a certain time and place, and in an individual religious Teacher, except we are able to show with a reasonable amount of certainty that God is really existent, a Being, *personal* like ourselves, *free*, and *above the laws* of the mere material universe, holding a *relation* to His creatures, such as one personal being holds to another; and, therefore, not a *mere idea* of our minds, not a *mere inference of our reason*, not a *mere necessity of our thought*, but actually *revealed* as in *living intercourse with man.* We cannot be required, at this point, to *define Personality.* All that we, at present, maintain is, that *Religion*, in the proper meaning of the word, demands a belief in a *Supreme Being*, whose *intelligence*, *freedom*, and *moral perfection*, can be identified with His *eternal existence*, so that He is *worthy of man's worship.* If the highest thought we can form of God is, that He is, in Himself,

infinitely perfect, then those attributes of our own human nature which we conceive as the highest attributes, such as *intelligence*, *freedom*, *moral goodness*, we must believe to be His and to be infinitely perfect in Him. True, when we speak of *The Infinite* we speak of that which is not commensurable with our thought; but to confess that our *conception* of the Supreme Being must still remain a *human* conception, and therefore inadequate, is not to deprive religion of *reality*, but only to keep it both *humble and aspiring*. We cannot *know* anything perfectly, but an imperfect knowledge has its correlative practical significance. *In so far as we are able to know God*, we are under the obligation, by the possession of that knowledge, to worship Him.

II. The *Free, Responsible, Moral Nature of Man* constituting him *a Spiritual Being*, in distinction from all mere animal existences and material mechanisms, is another of those *primary truths* which belong to the very substance of all religions, and therefore of *Christianity* as a religion which appeals by persuasion to the human heart and seeks to influence the life. Apart from all theories of the origin of the human race, the question may be put, *what is man* as he is addressed by the word of God, or that which claims to be the word of God, in the Scriptures? He certainly is regarded there as *rational*, as *moral*, as *spiritual;* in short, as capable of making a *free choice* of the aim and method of his life, as possessing some such mastery over himself and over the world around him, that it is not a mere mockery to make an appeal to his will. It is of no practical importance to prove that man's volition is absolutely free. The metaphysical difficulties which may be involved in the conception of human freedom are only of the same kind as beset all our simplest ideas, all attempts to penetrate below the surface of those facts with which we have to do in daily life. The *theory of vision*, *e.g.*, has never been satisfactorily set forth by philosophers. Yet vision itself is a fact, and the appeal to the *seeing man* to use his eyes, is quite independent of an explanation of the laws of perception. The Materialist, who denies the existence of any immaterial principle in man, is

compelled to add to the ordinary conception of matter certain qualities such as *thinking* and *feeling*, which cannot without confusion and contradiction be amalgamated with the primary elements of matter such as *extension* and *resistance*. The only result of his persistent denial of an immaterial world is, that he makes matter itself a mere contradiction and impossibility, for there is no intelligible sense (except a *symbolical* one) in which we can speak of an *extended thought* or a *solid feeling*. We must therefore abide by that *instinctive consciousness of duality* which is ultimate in human nature, and can never be resolved by any process of intellectual analysis. Admitting that man is *material and immaterial, i.e.*, to use the ordinary terms in which that distinction is expressed, that he is *body and soul*, we may fairly claim it as *a datum of consciousness*, that there is in the soul a sense of *relation* to other beings, that that *relation* is not merely one of *time* and *place*, but rises above time and place. We cannot limit our responsibility to our immediate surroundings. We are compelled to recognise ourselves as part of a larger world. We think of right and wrong as connected with an *ascending scale* of responsibility. If man were increased in strength a thousandfold, and if he had around him totally different laws of matter to deal with, our intimate conviction is, that he would still remain a *moral being*. He can only cease to be a moral being by going *lower* in nature and not by going *higher*. If he is rising (by development or in any other way), he is becoming *more and more responsible*, and not less and less so. The element of his being which puts him in the moral sphere is his *self-conscious freedom*, by which he is distinguished from all lower creatures. He may be imprisoned in circumstances—to a certain extent he is so—but he *knows that he is a prisoner*, and he *desires to be free*, and therefore it is *his nature to be free*. The lower orders of beings which may resemble and even approach humanity, still stop short of it. The animal mind cannot be conceived of as being brought up to the level of man by any process whatever. Doubtless there is *consciousness* in it, in the sense that *it takes cognisance of its*

own acts; it has a power of *volition;* but it is not, properly speaking, "*self-conscious,*" for it knows not itself as *an object of reflection*, it has no sense of itself as *answerable for its own being.* The mother bird fulfils its maternal functions with wonderful constancy and self-denial, though often, in the discharge of those functions, with cruel disregard of the consequences of its own actions; but the animal lives a simply *animal life*, and gives no evidence of its recognition of the place which that individual life occupies in the *order of nature.* It is very different with the *rational intelligence of man.* He knows (or if not, may learn) that he has not merely to *maintain his life* and to *propagate his kind*, but each individual being knows that he must hold himself *in right relation* to other creatures, *below* him and *around* him and *above* him. He knows (or can learn) that life is not a mere impulse to live, not a mere force to be followed, but an end to be reached. Man is conscious that he is a personal, individual being, not a mere fact of the universe, but able to *know himself* as an *object of moral approbation or the reverse.* Some have said that because there is an education through which man passes, and by which he is trained to the fulfilment of the law of his humanity, therefore he is not properly free; he may be a *moral* being without being a *free* being, his moral sense may be the *result of education*, and he is only a moral being just as he is a living organism, by *the laws of his development;* but to this it may be replied, that were there no *moral nature* to which the education appeals, no amount of training would produce the *moral result.* A dog can be taught to *imitate* moral actions, but the dog's *life*, nevertheless, cannot be made a *moral life.* The grand distinguishing fact of man's consciousness is this, that he *knows himself above some beings and below others*, that he knows that he is and where he is *in the order of beings*, and can frame his life to correspond with the claims of his position. The lower animal has no proper sense of *relation*, can never recognise its place in the order of things, that it is what it is and where it is. Man knows that he is both *lord of the earth* and *servant of God.* He sees him-

self surrounded by creatures which he esteems lower than himself, by other creatures like himself with whom he lives on terms of equality; and at the same time he is instinctively prompted to look up to that which is higher, he believes that he is not the highest, that he is not perfect, that he himself is capable of a purer and happier life, that there are those who live such a life. This sense of *relation* and *responsibility* is provided with its highest object and cultivation in the revelations of *religion*. It is impossible that man should be in *relation* to lower creatures and not have duties towards them. It is impossible that the individual should be one of a race and not be in a *moral relation* to them. If there exist, then, higher beings than man, the same law must apply to them. If there be One who is the Highest of all, *one Supreme Being*, reason suggests that to Him man must hold a *real* relation, the relation of the lower to the higher, the relation of reverence and worship. It is the duty, and it should be the highest aim, of man to know what is his relation to the Supreme Being, and to bring his life, so far as he is able, into harmony with it.

III. *The Future Life and the Individual Immortality of Man.* Christianity is not a mere moral system such as would remain practically applicable to the life of humanity, even though that life were narrowed to the limit of time and place here on earth. It contemplates the universal fact of man's imperfection, an imperfection which is both physical and moral; it claims to meet the universal want and desire of the human race, of *a higher life;* it addresses man as a dying creature, to whom death is not "*the be all and the end all*,"—who longs to obtain the victory over it; who feels that this world, with its inequalities and sufferings, does not satisfy his conception of life. The demonstration of the reality of an invisible state, and of the natural immortality of man, may be unsatisfactory; but the testimony of the race, both in all regions and in all times, to the belief in a world of spirits and an after life, is beyond discussion. Let it be called by what name it may, let it be traced to what cause it may, it is *a universal fact*, or if not

absolutely universal, practically so. A religion which professes to meet the necessities of humanity, as a whole, must be one which teaches hope for the future. To eliminate from Christianity its doctrine of immortality is to destroy its mission to the race. The distinction of the gospel is that it has "brought life and immortality to light," and its central body of facts is rendered worthless if they bear no more than a moral significance,—if the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ are not the assurance which they are represented to be of the hope of the future. We are not concerned at this point to describe the basis on which the belief in immortality must rest —whether it be an *à priori* datum of the soul or an *à posteriori* conclusion of the reason from the data of experience. We are careful only to distinguish the Christian view of man's future from any defective or perverted representation of it. From the first page to the last the Bible treats man as a being whose happiness is of immeasurable extent, as in the sight of God unspeakably precious, as invited to hope and rejoice in the favour of his Creator. And even where, as in portions of the Old Testament, the references to a future state are indistinct, still the relation between man and God is so represented that it is impossible to think of it as bounded by a few years. The conception of the present world as the whole of man's existence is out of harmony with the sublime moral tone of the Old Testament and its fundamental fact of a covenant with Jehovah, to say nothing of many distinct proofs of the familiarity of the Jewish people with the hopes which are identified with an invisible and future state. In the New Testament, which is admittedly an outcome from the Old, the prominent feature is the appeal which is made to man as personally and individually accountable to God, and destined to appear in the light of a future revelation of Divine righteousness. "Every one of us must give an account of himself to God." If that account is not perfectly rendered in this life by individual men, there must be a continuance of the same personal and individual existence, otherwise there cannot be a

judgment. Nor will any ideas of the growth and trial of the race, regarded as a whole, satisfy the language of Scripture, however it may satisfy the theories of philosophical speculators. Whether or not it would be a sufficient support of morality to say there is a development of humanity while there is an extinction of individual men, we will not here inquire; but it is indisputable that Christianity addresses men as individually accountable to God, as individually reserved for judgment, as individually accepted or condemned in an eternal future. We must steadfastly resist all compromise on the doctrine of a future life and personal immortality. Although there be mystery about the high places of our faith, we know that they are not the less substantial realities because they are hidden by the clouds. What we are able to see clearly is solid fact, and it leads up our thoughts by a visible ascent until thought can wing its flight no farther, and faith supplies its place, with "*the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*" (ἐλπιζομένων ὑπόστασις, πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων. Heb. xi. 1).

IV. *The Reality of Sin and the Moral Necessity of Redemption.* We can easily suppose that, to some minds, religion does not necessarily include these elements. While there may be a recognition of some of the relations between man and God, others may yet be ignored. Reverence and a feeling of dependence, obedience to the laws of Nature and sympathy with the benevolent purposes of the Creator, observance of moral distinctions and desire for moral perfection as bound up with the continuance and welfare of the race,—all may still fall short of what is generally understood as religion. There are those who would maintain that any elevation of the soul to a lofty object, any life which is sufficiently above the level of ordinary life to be called a higher life—whether a devotion to an intellectual aim, or to an æsthetic ideal, or to a moral purpose, or to a spiritual and super-earthly hope—is still to be regarded as *religion*. But however we may extend the application of the term religion (which is not a scriptural word in its

modern use), the limit which is prescribed by the addition of the name *Christian*, compels us at once to a clear and distinct conception of the term. By the Christian religion is meant that relation of man to God which is exhibited in both word and fact in the Lord Jesus Christ. The message of the New Testament is sent to those who are not simply morally imperfect, but both sinful and dying. Sin is a word which has its congeners in every language of the world, and represents a fact of human consciousness. If there be a moral law and a moral Lawgiver, then the fact of a violation of moral law becomes a personal fact; it places the violator of the law in a distinct relation of antagonism to the moral Lawgiver, who not only gives but maintains the law. The consciousness of that antagonism is the consciousness of sin in the offender, and produces a sense of guilt and the desert of punishment. The vindication of law is a constituent idea of the moral government which is manifest in the world. Now to some minds, in which the conception of moral government is only partially present, it would seem to be enough to regard sin as moral defect, which can be removed by a natural process or by the supply of moral influences from without. But instantly that we add to the fact of a broken law or an unsatisfied moral demand, the *personal relation* of the free responsible being to the moral Ruler, it is evident that more is required than a mere adjustment; the man himself must be delivered from that which alienates him from God. The Christian doctrine of sin and redemption regards man as a free, responsible, spiritual being, capable of holding fellowship with God, and created to be His loving child and dwell in His presence. This is not the place in which to speak more definitely of the method of redemption. The theologian will feel it necessary to define his conception, both of the fact itself and of the means by which the fact is represented in the Scripture to be brought about,—but here we are only insisting on the primary necessity that a sinful being should be delivered from sin in every sense; that is, that it should be removed

from his nature, removed from his condition, removed from his relation to God, removed from his future possibilities; in short, that he should be potentially, though not for the present actually, sinless. The Christian conception of redemption is, a new creation which preserves identity and secures eternal life. We pass on, then, to the last of those primary truths which we have enumerated as standing on the first broad boundary of the Christian religion, the first line of its fortresses, which all Christians must be concerned to defend to the utmost.

V. *Divine Agency in the Individual and in Society.* By this is meant an agency of the Divine Spirit beyond that which is implied in the constitution of human nature, and in the working of those physical and moral laws which may be said to be universal. From the beginning to the end of Scripture there is revealed the special Divine agency which works both in individuals and in society. If it be denied that such agency is possible, it must be denied on metaphysical grounds, in which case we may fairly leave the denial to be met by metaphysical arguments with which we have nothing to do in this place; or else it must be proved inconsistent with the facts of human consciousness and history. Christianity claims to be an historical religion; the records are records of human lives and experiences, and of great social facts. The truth which it places beside them, and by which alone, it maintains, they can be vindicated as real, is the truth that the personal God reveals His presence and His spiritual power, as and where He pleases, for the lifting up of the individual human consciousness, for the production of new facts in experience, and for the development of new forms of society. We state the truth in its most general form, because it is only that widest view of it that we desire here to identify with Christianity. It is inconceivable that the Scriptures should be in any sense admitted to be a true revelation, or that the Christian religion should be acknowledged, if all special Divine agency is denied. We can suppose a deistical mind accepting the personal existence of God, and

still denying that in the facts of the world there is any revelation of an agency other than that which is omnipresent in all thought and action and in all changes of human history. But when Christianity ascribes certain individual experiences and social phenomena to the manifestation of a spiritual power, it demands of us that we regard the omnipresent Spirit of the universe as acting in a direct and special manner, which is adapted to a special end, and which is as truly distinct from all other action as the act of creation is distinct from the normal development of already existing powers. This the Deist, and all who think with him, denies, and therefore it is needful that it be brought out into clear and decided affirmation as one of the salient points of the Christian stronghold. Over against the whole representation of the Bible, of God's intercourse with man, stands the theory that the universe is a self-acting totality, and that all the so-called facts of the Bible can be explained as the manifestations of those inherent forces which are ever seeking development, and by their infinitely varied combinations effecting the phenomena of a progressive history. Such a view, as we shall see hereafter, is both contradictory and against the testimony of consciousness, which must be our last appeal. Meanwhile let it be distinctly understood, Christianity must stand or fall on the ground of its own representations. If it cannot vindicate them, it is superfluous and worse than superfluous. If the language of the Bible is philosophically incorrect (which we by no means admit), then it must be shown to be borne out by some other evidence to which even philosophy, so-called, must bow. What this evidence is, will appear in the course of this review of the Christian argument as a whole.

The foregoing remarks will suffice to indicate the principle which lies at the foundation of the method which we have followed. The personality of God must form the central truth from which all else comes forth. *A Divine Person*, perfect in wisdom, power, and goodness, must be surrounded with a universe in intelligent relation with Himself, capable of

being His reflection, therefore of receiving from Him *the revelation* of wisdom, might, and love. Thus we are led to the conception of *the creature man* as made in the image of the Creator, and of the history of the world as *a course of Divine manifestations.* From the theistic argument which embraces the evidence for the existence, character, and government of God, passing to that of Revelation, we regard the conception of a Divine Being revealing to men Truth, gradually, and by fitting modes of communication, both as an *à priori* possibility and moral necessity, and as proved *à posteriori* by a consideration of the history of what mankind has acknowledged to be Divine communications, by the authority of the written Scriptures. This argument concentrates itself in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and is confirmed by the facts of Christian life, by the practical application of the truth in the course of ages, by the testimony given to it over the wide extent of the human family, showing that Christianity is the only religion which is universally adapted to meet the wants of man.

Before entering on this connected line of argument it will be necessary to estimate as clearly as possible the present position of the Christian advocate as summoned to defend the truth against direct assaults; and therefore to describe the salient points of attack which require the most vigilant examination. In order to make this estimate of the modern position as thorough and clear as possible, it will be requisite to pass in rapid review the history of those movements in the past which have been antagonistic to Christian faith, whether in individuals or in schools of thought. The conflict between faith and unbelief has a history, and the study of that history is a great help to explain much in the attitude of the modern opponents of Christianity. The limits of this work will not admit of more than a brief outline of so large a subject, but the chief end of such a review of the past will be to elucidate principles rather than to describe the whole body of facts.

CHAPTER II.

REVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF UNBELIEF AS EMBODIED IN DIRECT ASSAULTS UPON CHRISTIANITY.

THE defence of Christianity from the attacks of its opponents has varied very widely during the course of its history. At different periods different aspects of the truth have been met by direct unbelief; sometimes in an individual, sometimes in a prevailing philosophy or tendency of thought. Seldom has the whole body of Christian doctrine been made the object of attack. Frequently, where particular portions of the Christian truth have been denied, others which have been maintained as essential to religion have been represented as unquestionable. When the Church of Christ first entered upon a distinct existence, proclaiming a message to the world, and inviting believers into a practical expression of the truth identified with the name of Jesus Christ, in daily life, Christians were called "a sect everywhere spoken against." The first opponents of the disciples of Christ were Jews, who regarded Christians as heretics, condemned by the authority of the law of Moses. The first arguments of Christians were in order to show that the revelations of the gospel were in accordance with, and in fulfilment of, the earlier revelations of the Old Testament. To Jesus Christ "gave all the prophets witness."[1] As soon as Christianity went forth from the boundaries of its native soil in Palestine to face the heathen world which it aimed to transform and renew, it was challenged by three separate, though not unrelated, antagonists. By the heathen political power it was regarded as a form of anarchy and revolution. By the leaders of the heathen religions it was viewed as a direct foe to be crushed, because it taught a doc-

[1] Acts x. 43.

trine absolutely inconsistent with the maintenance of idolatry in any of its forms, and with the authority of a heathen priesthood. By the various existing systems of philosophy it was sneered at as a form of folly and unreason, and opposed as a dangerous enemy to the dignity of great names. The earliest apologies of Christians were of a negative rather than a positive character, repelling unjust accusations and pleading for the liberty of faith against a jealous State and the misconstructions of ignorance and indifference. The names of some of the first defenders of the faith are almost all that remain to us; a few fragments of their writings found in the ecclesiastical history of Eusebius being all that has been preserved. Such were Aristides and Quadratus, Melito of Sardis, Miltiades and Claudius Apollinaris. *Justin Martyr* (b. A.D. 89, d. A.D. 163), who was educated as a philosopher, and whose death is said by some to have been brought about in the reign of Marcus Antoninus by the antagonism of the philosophers led by Crescens the cynic, illustrates, both in his own history and in his writings, the growing necessity which was being felt that Christianity should be vindicated as a system of truth against the opposition not only of the heathen rulers and priests, but of the heathen philosophers as well. The underlying thought in the mind of Justin was that which was afterwards much more fully developed in the case of Clement of Alexandria and Origen, viz., that Christianity was prepared for by Divine Providence both in the Jewish and Gentile worlds, by the course of revelation, and that it meets the universal expectation of mankind. (See his two Apologies and his Dialogue against Trypho.)[1] *Clement of Alexandria*, who was born at Athens about the middle of the second century, and lived most of his life in the great scholastic city of Alexandria, in his great work "The Hortatory Address to the Greeks" (Λόγος προτρεπτικὸς πρὸς Ἕλληνας), "The Pedagogue" (ὁ παιδαγωγὸς), addressed to new converts to Christianity, and "The Miscellanies" (τὰ στρώματα) describing the perfect character of the Christian as

[1] "Apol." ii. 10.

fully possessed of the truth, may be regarded as not so much anticipating direct attacks upon Christianity as preparing the minds of inquirers for its reception. *Tertullian*, in his "De Testimonio Animæ," makes an appeal to human consciousness which is deeply interesting as among the earliest attempts to show the psychological aspects of the argument for the truth, its adaptation to the soul of man. "I call in a new testimony," says Tertullian,[1] "yea, one which is better known than all literature, more discussed than all doctrines, more public than all publications, greater than the whole man, I mean all which is man's. Stand forth, O soul, whether thou art a Divine and eternal substance, as most philosophers believe,—if it is so, thou wilt be the less likely to lie,—or whether thou art the very opposite of Divine, because indeed a mortal thing, as Epicurus alone thinks,—in that case there will be the less temptation for thee to speak falsely in this instance;—whether thou art received from heaven, or sprung from earth; whether thou art formed of members or of atoms; whether thine existence begins with that of the body or thou art put into it at a later stage; from whatever source and in whatever way, thou makest man a rational being, in the highest degree capable of thought and knowledge—stand forth and give thy witness." But the early opposition to Christianity is best represented by its culmination in the appearance of the philosopher Celsus, and his deliberate and formal attempt to overthrow the authority of the Christian records. Of this attack and the defence which it called forth from the great Greek Christian father, Origen, we shall now proceed to speak at length.

Celsus and Origen. Origen was born, probably in Alexandria, about 185 A.D., and died, in the seventieth year of his age, at Tyre in 254 A.D. Towards the close of his life, at the request of his friend Ambrosius, he published a work entitled "Against Celsus," in which he answers the attacks upon Christians and Christianity which were put forth in a book

[1] "De Test. An." i.

published some time before by a certain philosopher, with the title "Λόγος ἀληθὴς" (A True Discourse). Who Celsus was is not very clearly ascertained. Origen himself seems doubtful. He was probably a philosopher of the Eclectic school, Origen thinks of the Epicurean, but he admits that there are sentiments in his book which he derived from Plato. He has heard that there was a Celsus in the time of Nero, and another in the time of Adrian; but at the conclusion of his work he speaks of Celsus as possibly still surviving. The allusions to Marcion and the Marcellians by Celsus proves that he lived after the middle of the second century; probably his book was published somewhere about 180 A.D., and he may have been contemporary with Origen. The quotations from the work of Celsus are very numerous in Origen's reply. We can form an accurate opinion of the argument, and most of its salient points are clearly stated by the Christian fathers. The attack which Celsus makes upon Christianity may be arranged under three heads: 1. The objections offered from a Judaistic point of view, which are put into the mouth of a Jew. 2. Objections to Christians on alleged inconsistency of their characters, and danger to the State from their religion. 3. Objections from the philosophical standpoint, to the miracles, to the doctrines of Christianity, and to the claims of Christ as a Teacher. There are many indications that Celsus had not carefully studied either the Old or the New Testament. He frequently entirely misrepresents the teachings of Christ. He alleges as objections to Christianity what are now acknowledged to be amongst its strongest proofs of Divine origin, such as its triumphs over the moral degradation of those to whom it was preached. He strangely enough ridicules the accounts of miracles as inventions of Christians to magnify the glory of Christ, and yet attributes them to magic and the power of demons. The only plausible ground which he assumes is the philosophical, where he attempts to show that the idea of a redemption of man is inconsistent with a cosmical development which, instead of putting man at the head of the earthly

order, gives him only a subordinate place as a part of the great whole. But here (though the answer of Origen is very far from satisfactory, which it could scarcely be expected to be in that early stage of Christian theology), Celsus evinces so little knowledge of the higher doctrine of Christianity, as it is exhibited in the writings of St. Paul, that the attack completely fails, being directed against a false representation of the truth. It is the opinion of Neander that the attack of Celsus upon Christianity was only negative, and that he intended to follow it by a more positive exposition of his own philosophico-religious system in opposition to the Christian, appealing to ideas predominant in the general philosophical consciousness of the time. "He is the original representative of a class of intellects which, in the various attacks on Christianity, has over and over again presented itself to notice; wit and acuteness without earnestness of purpose or depth of research; a worldly understanding that looks at things merely on the surface, and delights in hunting up difficulties and contradictions. His objections against Christianity serve one important end: they present, in the clearest light, the true opposition between the Christian position and that of the ancient world; and, in general, the relation which revealed religion will ever be found to hold to the ground assumed by natural reason. Thus it is that many of his objections and strictures become nothing less than testimonies to the truth." [1]

Porphyry (233 A.D.–305 A.D.), of Phœnician origin, scholar and philosopher, was probably much better instructed in Christianity than Celsus. He was an eminent logician and interpreter of Plotinus of the Neo-platonic school. He wrote rather to counteract the growing influence of Christianity than to prove it false. He ridicules the false methods of Christian writers, and attempts to show that the teaching of Christ was unphilosophical. But the main strength of his attack was directed against the Scripture as containing

[1] Neander: "Hist.," vol. i. p. 227 (Bohn); *cf.* Farrar: "Critical History of Free Thought," pp. 70–76.

discrepancies and mistakes, and the divergencies between the teaching of St. Peter and St. Paul. His blows aimed at the allegorical method of interpretation which had prevailed so long in Alexandria, were both powerful and well merited. He drew up a system of theology from the pretended responses of the oracles, some of which have reference to Christ and Christianity. But while denouncing the worship of Christ as God, he frankly admitted that He was pre-eminent in piety and not to be calumniated. His works against Christianity have not survived. We are indebted for our knowledge of them to the references of others. Socrates, the Church historian, has maintained that he was an apostate from Christianity. He is said to have sat at the feet of Origen. But probably he was a Platonist, and his opposition to Christianity arose out of the consciousness which was growing in his time that Platonism and every form of philosophy was losing its hold in the rapid advancement of a more practical and popular form of religion.

Hierocles lived at the time of the Diocletian persecution, 303 A.D., president of Bithynia, and afterwards prefect of Alexandria. He wrote a life of the Pythagorean philosopher, Apollonius of Tyana, whom he set forth as a rival to Jesus Christ. His work has perished, but we find references to it in Eusebius and Lactantius. He called it "Λόγοι φιλαλήθεις πρὸς τοὺς Χριστιανούς" (Truthloving words to the Christians). "To give a new impulse to the declining religion of Paganism, in its resistance to the overwhelming power of Christianity, it was necessary to direct men's attention to those heroes of the old religion who, it was imagined, could be set up in comparison to Him on whom alone the faith of the Christians reposed."[1] But the time of triumph was at hand. The persecution of Diocletian was very shortly afterwards followed by a reaction in favour of Christians. The edict of toleration, promulgated by Galerius in A.D. 311, was soon followed by the concession of Constantine, and the voices of the enemies of the faith were for a time silenced.

[1] Neander, vol. i. p. 240.

At the commencement of the fourth century the attitude of Christian apologists became much bolder and more aggressive. Lactantius, pupil of Arnobius in Africa, and a great rhetorician, wrote "The Divine Institutes" in seven books, dedicated to the Emperor Constantine, "the first of Roman princes," he describes him, "to repudiate errors, and to acknowledge and honour the majesty of the one and only true God." As tutor to the emperor's son, Crispus, Lactantius wrote in a courtly vein, and the tone of his work may be judged of by the remark he makes: "Our number is continually increased from the worshippers of gods, and is never lessened, not even in persecution itself. Who is there, I pray, so foolish and so blind as not to see on which side wisdom is?"[1] The chief value of the work of Lactantius is the testimony gathered together in it to the truth of God in heathen poets and philosophers.

The centuries which followed the conversion of the Roman Emperor and the nominal acceptance of Christianity in the western world, were characterized rather by the controversies which sprang up in respect to Christian doctrines, than by direct attacks on the authority of Christianity itself. *Athanasius* (296 A.D.–373 A.D.) was the author of a learned apology, entitled "Λόγος κατὰ Ἑλλήνων," (*Oratio contra Gentes*), addressed to the heathen world. *Cyril* of Alexandria, bishop in 412, died 444 A.D., wrote, in 433, a reply to the Apostate Julian, in ten books, maintaining the superiority of Christianity to heathen systems. The great name, however, of the polemic period of the Church is that of *Augustine*, bishop of Hippo (born 354 A.D., died 430). Perhaps his most masterly work was the "Civitas Dei" (The City of God), which may be described as partly apologetic and partly didactic. He also published, shortly before he was baptized, a work, "Contra Academicos," in which he invited his old companions in the school of Plato to find their true rest and satisfaction in the faith of a Christian. Doubt is not safety. It leads to moral evil. If the mind be not satisfied with the certainty of truth,

[1] "Inst. Christian."

the body will assert its claim. The academics gloried in their scepticism. They maintained that nothing could be certainly known. "The gospel," replied Augustine, "is the highest knowledge." In his treatises on "Christian Doctrine" and "The Enchiridion, or Handbook of Faith, Hope and Love," Augustine appears in the character of a defender of the faith against Manichæans, whose doctrines he had held when a young man, and other forms of unbelief; but the "City of God" was a much more comprehensive appeal to the heathen world to renounce all opposition to Christianity, and accept that true kingdom which could not be moved when all other things were visibly shaken and rapidly passing away. "Hitherto," says Dean Milman, "the apologies had been framed to meet particular exigencies; they were either brief and pregnant statements of Christian doctrines, refutations of prevalent calumnies, invectives against the follies and crimes of Paganism; or confutations of antichristian works, like those of Celsus, Porphyry, or Julian; closely following their line of argument, and rarely expanding into general and comprehensive views of the great conflict." But Augustine recognised the extraordinary character of the crisis at which he wrote. Rome had fallen before the Goths. An old and corrupt state of society was crumbling away. The minds of men were peculiarly susceptible of religious impressions. The pure and holy teachings of the gospel are contrasted by Augustine at great length with the contradictions and errors of Pagan philosophies, and the purposes of God are shown to have been fulfilled in the kingdom of Christ.

After the time of Augustine, from the fifth century down to the fourteenth, the domination of an ecclesiastical hierarchy was so complete that anything like direct assault on the truths of Christianity was rare and comparatively feeble. Against Jews and Mahomedans, speculative philosophers and various heretical writers within the Church itself, apologetic works occasionally appeared; but the general character of the long period of the formation of European society during what is

called the Middle Ages, is rather that of the growth of theological system and terminology than of evidential literature strictly so called. There was still opposition to Christianity in the Paganism of the German and Slavonic tribes, but it was not of an intellectual kind. It was met by the practical work of missionaries, and gradually subsided as the mass of European society became pervaded with Christian ideas and institutions. The leading feature of the scholastic period, from about the seventh century, was the introduction into the Christian Church itself, as represented in its leading theologians and thinkers, of the spirited method of the ancient Greek dialectics. The attempt to systematize Christian truth in accordance with the philosophy of Aristotle, not without some influence from the ideal spirit of Plato, led to many argumentative aspects of the truth being presented to the world. The minds of men were summoned to grapple with profound metaphysical problems by the theological controversies of the Eastern Church on the Person of Christ and the mysteries of the Trinity. And after the political genius of Charlemagne had procured something like a settlement of Europe, and covered it with a system of intellectual training, which was fruitful in results, the solitary researches of monasteries became the more widely-spread controversies of universities, and prepared the way for more enlightened views of Christianity.

It was an instance of the reaction of this spread of knowledge and intellectual activity on the theological world itself, that in monasteries, like that of Bec in Normandy, we find questions and doubts agitating the minds of professed believers, and calling forth apologetic works of some importance. Two great men adorned the eleventh century, Lanfranc (died 1089), and Anselm (died 1109), both distinguished by their controversial ability, and the latter by his philosophical acumen. Although the position from which such men started was that of undoubting faith, they both sought, and especially Anselm, to satisfy the awakening intellect with a foundation of reason for the creed of the Church. Anselm's two great philosophical works, "The Mono-

logium" and "Proslogium," are interesting examples of early attempts to prove the existence of God, as his "Cur Deus Homo" is an example of theological reasoning on the atonement from the point of view of the Incarnation. "His books," says Mr. Maurice, "were not hard dogmatical treatises written in cold blood, to build up a system or to vanquish opponents. They were actual guides to the doubter; attempts, often made with much reluctant modesty, to untie knots which worthy men found to be interfering with their peace and with their practice."[1] This is not the place to examine Anselm's theistic arguments. Suffice it to say that in the "Monologium," on the Essence of the Divinity, the appeal is made to consciousness and *à priori* methods of reasoning. In the "Proslogium or Alloquy," the searching mind of man is supposed to direct itself to God, to be Himself the teacher of His creature. It is compared with Augustine's "Confessions," having almost more of a devotional than philosophical character.

The controversies of the middle ages between the Nominalists and the Realists, prepared the way for the fuller development of scholastic dogmatism. The reign of Aristotle was supreme —but more perhaps in the method than in the thought of the period. The realistic tendency of the Dominican as opposed to the nominalistic tendency of the Franciscan, culminated in the profound theological systems of the great schoolmen, and found its fullest expression in Thomas Aquinas, in the thirteenth century. But already, in the twelfth century, Peter Abelard (born 1079) had, by his nominalist speculations applied to theology, given a place to the spirit of scepticism, which to some extent was the spirit of his age. His university life at Paris produced an intellectual ferment, which long continued to work on the mind of Europe. His work, "Sic et Non," published for the first time by Cousin in 1836, is a collection of what Kant would call antinomies of the reason, alleged contradictions, in the deepest questions of theology and ethics. The question has been asked, Was the free-

[1] "History of Philosophy," Pt. III. ch. iii.

thinking of Abelard really sceptical, or was it not rather a kind of Protestantism and theological criticism? He acknowledges the authority of Scripture. Cousin thinks it was a kind of Socratic method of one who was really seeking truth among the confusions of dogmatic theology. But the conflict which thus commenced in real earnest between the spirit of rational inquiry and the spirit of ecclesiastical dogmatism, was gradually decided in favour of the latter, chiefly through the prevalence of the Aristotelian dialectics. Peter Lombard ("Magister Sententiarum," died 1164) introduced the system of systematizing scholasticism in the collection of dicta from ecclesiastical authorities. But his successors—Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas—came under the influence of that great revival of the study of Aristotle, due to the Arabian learning poured into the schools of Europe, and their works were of a much more profound and original character. Aquinas was born 1225 or 1227, died 1274 ("Doctor Angelicus"). He was the greatest disputant of the middle ages. "From first to last he was thinking of all that could be said on both sides of the question he was discussing." As a matter of course he expresses many doubts, though with a view to answer them. His books are a storehouse of arguments, both of orthodox and heretical and infidel opinions. "The reasoner against almost any tenet of the Catholic faith may be furnished at a short notice with almost any kind of weapon out of the armoury of the great Catholic doctor."[1] As might be supposed, the difficulties once expressed were by no means always removed. The climax of dogmatism marks the dawn of criticism. Over against the Dominican school must be placed the Franciscan, and in the triumph of the Church there was already a reaction preparing, which under new influences came forth both in remarkable men of genius, like Roger Bacon and Dante, and in the general awakening of the European mind as the incubus of ecclesiastical oppression

[1] Maurice's "Hist. Phil.," Pt. III. ch. v.

began to be loosened, and the world recovered from the depressing effect of religious wars, with a larger knowledge of mankind, and a more eager desire for moral and political development. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries there was a philosophical spirit alive in the schools which frequently took the form of sceptical inquiry. Under the patronage of the great family of the Medici, at Florence, defenders of Christianity appeared who debated philosophical questions, such as the superiority of Plato to Aristotle, aiming to show that it was possible to find in the truths of religion a satisfaction for reason. Hallam, in his "Literature of Europe," vol. i. p. 138, speaking of this period remarks: "The extreme superstition of the popular creed, the conversation of Jews and Mahomedans, the unbounded admiration of Pagan genius and virtue, the natural tendency of many minds to doubt and to perceive difficulties, which the schoolmen were apt to find everywhere and nowhere to solve, joined to the irreligious spirit of the Aristotelian philosophy, especially as modified by Averroës, could not but engender a secret tendency towards infidelity, the course of which may be traced, with ease, in the writings of those ages." Many defences of Christianity appeared in the fifteenth century. The work of Marsilius Ficinus, "De Christiana religione et fidei pietate;" that of the great Florentine monk Savonarola, "Triumphus Crucis seu de veritate religionis Christianæ;" those of Alfonso de Spina, a converted Jew, Æneas Silvius, Picus of Mirandola, and the very remarkable treatise of Raimond de Sebonde, the "Liber Creaturarum seu Theologia Naturalis," in which he labours to show that the truths of religion have a rational foundation. There were two influences which combined in the fifteenth century to promote the development of an inquiring spirit—the one was the growth of *mysticism in theology*, represented by such names as Ruysbroek, Eckart, Tauler, Thomas à Kempis, Suso, Gerson, and others; the other was the extraordinary *revival of humanism*, both in literature and in politics, and the study of the classical writings through the destruction of Constanti-

nople, 1453, and the opening of the Greek treasures of learning to the more active western mind.

The latter half of the fifteenth century was one of those pregnant periods which may be said to send forth their fruits through all subsequent ages. The invention of printing in 1440; the conquest of Constantinople and diffusion of Greek literature in 1453; the discovery of America in 1490, and the marvellous changes which transpired in the social state and political life of nations, together with what must be recognised by every Christian as a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit on many eminent men and in many places, partly, perhaps, assisted by the remembrance of great judgments poured out, as in the case of the Black Death or Plague, and the revelations of ecclesiastical corruption in the decaying monasteries, combined to render the close of the fifteenth century a truly revolutionary time, in which might well be sown the seeds of a great reformation extending from religion through all the departments of human life. Into the history of the period of the Reformation itself it is not possible to enter in this hasty sketch. The activity of the Christian Church received at that time a completely new impetus which carried it in every direction. Biblical studies were promoted by the conflicts of theological controversy; and though for a while the mind of Europe was too much absorbed in the positive side of Christian truth and practical religion to attend closely to the subject of doubt and evidence, yet the intense and universal activity awakened prepared the way for a large increase of speculative thought, which necessarily brought with it criticism and unbelief. It was not, however, till the work of the first reformers had been accomplished, and the dogmatic period of the Protestant Church brought about its reaction, that any large amount of rationalistic or sceptical thought actually found expression. The conflicts of those who, while they discarded the errors and corruptions of a false Church, could not altogether agree among themselves in their desire to formulate their faith, led to a revolt in many minds from all theological

definition, and to a questioning and criticising spirit which gave birth to modern rationalism. The connection of civil penalties and disabilities with religious dogma, the great error of the Reformation, imposed bonds on the conscience almost as ruinous as those of Rome. Earnest, blameless, highminded men were imprisoned, banished, even martyred, in the cause of dogmatic uniformity. The theological controversies which were waged, often about speculative distinctions and subtleties, hindered materially the growth of spiritual life. Out of the deadness of such a time grew rapidly the poisonous plant of unbelief. The wars of Protestantism did much to clear the air, like thunderstorms, making religion the cause of nations and peoples. But the immediate sequel was apathy and indifference, not only to religious symbols and confessions, but to religion itself. At the same time, partly due to the revival of learning, and partly due doubtless to the religious reformation itself, there commenced an entirely new movement in the philosophical and scientific mind of Europe which acted most powerfully on the faith of men. *Lord Bacon* may be said to have re-established both philosophy and science on the basis of experience and the inductive method; and the appeal to fact and observation, which became from that time the principle of all inquiry, was made by Descartes, in the seventeenth century, the foundation of a new system of psychology and philosophy, in the study of human consciousness. The same revolution in the method of thought is exemplified in the system of Spinoza, though carried to an extreme. The laws of thought are taken to be the basis on which all existence rests, and Spinoza made the attempt to form a complete intellectual philosophy of the universe by the reduction of its parts to ultimate principles and absolute laws whose certainty rests entirely on consciousness. These great thinkers of the seventeenth century, although they were not theologians, had great influence upon the mind of their age, and therefore upon the attitude which the more speculative and critical assumed towards the truths of religion. There are two main forms of doubt which appeared

during the century following the Reformation, both springing from the same source—the appeal of the human mind to itself as the only foundation of certainty,—the one was *Deism* in England, the other was *Rationalism* in Germany. To these two uprisings of the human intellect against Revelation, and attempts to supersede it by an appeal to reason, we must now refer at some length.

The seventeenth century was an era of revolutions. In politics, in philosophy, and in religion, there were wonderful changes in men's thoughts, the outcome of that mental quickening and excitement which characterizes the close of the middle age and the sixteenth century throughout. The school of *English Deists*, or, as they were sometimes called, *Theists*, may be said to have commenced with *Lord Herbert of Cherbury*, brother of George Herbert the poet (born 1581, died 1648). His works were "De Veritate" (1624); "De Causis Errorum" (1645); "De Religione Laici," "De Religione Gentilium" (1663). An autobiography was published in 1764. He made the human mind itself the ultimate test and standard of truth, reducing the axiomatic principles of religion to five: the existence of God, the duty of worship, the cultivation of piety and virtue, the efficacy of repentance, the future state of rewards and punishments. He was followed by a succession of writers down to the middle of the eighteenth century who, with various forms of attack upon positive Christianity, all recognised the necessity of some religion which, as they attempted to find a basis for it in the moral instincts, was called Natural Religion. Such were Hobbes, the philosopher of Malmesbury (1588–1679); Blount (1654–1693); and after the influence of John Locke's philosophy began to spread, a more numerous class of writers arose, the chief of whom were Toland (1669–1722); the Earl of Shaftesbury (1671–1713); Collins (1676–1729); Woolston (1669–1733); Tindal (1657–1733); Morgan (died 1743); and Chubb (1679–1747). It will not be possible to consider these writers separately; but it may be remarked that there were three main features of their Deism

which outlasted their own individual influence. They attempted to show (1) that all that was true and valuable in Christianity was a republication of the law of Nature; (2) that the supernatural element in the Scriptures was not credible; (3) that a critical study of the history of the canon deprived the sacred books of all special authority over faith. The case of Tindal may be referred to as the best example of the spirit of Deism, separated from the carping objections to the Old and New Testaments of such men as Collins, Morgan, and Chubb. In 1706 Tindal published "The Rights of the Christian Church Asserted;" and in his old age the work by which he is known as a Deist, "Christianity as Old as the Creation" (1730). The idea of the book is that "the gospel is a republication of the religion of Nature." He tries to establish the needlessness of a positive revelation, and the impossibility of maintaining the obligation of it. If man's perfection be living according to the constitution of human nature, and if God seeks the good of His creatures by the laws He appoints and their penalties, then the end of all things must be human happiness, and the religion which is derived from Nature must be perfect. He then tries to show that it cannot be for the good of man to distinguish the positive duties of a revealed religion from the dictates of the moral nature; and he endeavours to support his position by referring to the difficulties which are found in Christianity, and the contradictions of natural and moral instinct which are assumed to be in the Scriptures. It was to this work, which Tindal might be said to have left as a legacy to the world, that Bishop Butler replied in his immortal "Analogy." The remarks, frequently quoted, from the preface to the latter work indicate the immense influence which the Deistical school was obtaining in that atmosphere of political reaction and exhaustion which followed the violent convulsions of the seventeenth century. "The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature" was published in 1736, three years after the death of Dr. Tindal. In the advertisement prefixed to the first edition, Dr. Butler said: "It is come—I

know not how—to be taken for granted by many persons that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry; but that it is, now at length, discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment, and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were by way of reprisal, for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world." It must not be forgotten that there was at that time an awakening of the scientific mind which produced a renewed confidence in the uniformity of Nature. Butler had this fact in view in the composition of his "Analogy." An Author of Nature is presupposed. The aim is negative and practical rather than theoretical and positive. It is, in fact, an appeal to consciousness, as was so much of the Deism of the day. There is enough rational and moral evidence of Christianity to render mankind responsible for its rejection.

Passing from the school of early Deists to the sceptical writers of the eighteenth century, it is necessary to take account of the continental influence which began at that time to be felt among English writers. Infidelity and immorality became rife, both in Germany and France, after the controversies of the age succeeding the Reformation had begun to subside. A writer so early as 1630, referring to the state of religion in the free city of Hamburg, describes it in terms which apply to a vast extent of Europe through the next hundred and fifty years:[1] "*Firstly*, there are those who believe that religion is nothing but a mere fiction, invented to keep the masses within restraint; *secondly*, there are those who give preference to no faith, but think that all religions have a germ of truth; and *thirdly*, there are those who, confessing that there must be one true religion, are unable to decide whether it is Papal, Calvinistic or Lutheran, and consequently believe nothing at all." The influence of philosophers like Descartes, Spinoza, and Locke, Condillac, Helvetius, and the French

[1] Quoted in Hurst's "History of Rationalism."

Sensationalist school, and of such writers as Bodin, Montaigne, Charron, Bayle, Voltaire, Montesquieu, J. J. Rousseau, on English thought, was manifest through the whole of the latter half of the eighteenth century, and particularly exemplified in such writers as Hume and Gibbon. *Bolingbroke* (1678–1751) may be regarded as intermediate between the early Deists and the later sceptics. His philosophy was historical and political, and his letters and essays on the subject of religion contain rather reflections on Providence, Duty and Revelation, than a direct assault upon Christianity. He criticises the Old Testament severely, distinguishes between the gospel of Christ and the gospel of Paul, and doubts the authenticity of the Gospels. We trace in his method the sensationalism of the Continent and the commencement of historical inquiry which some of the French writers had fostered. *David Hume* was born 1711, and died 1776. His visit to France in 1734, where he spent three years, had great influence upon his future speculations and spirit. He was "loaded with civilities in Paris by men and women of all ranks and stations," and even thought of settling there for life. He was, says Mr. Maurice, "a Scotchman whose mind was shaped in France at the very epoch when the idea of a sensational philosophy was beginning to establish itself there and to displace every other, at the very time when Voltaire was borrowing the arms of Locke to overthrow the abstract philosophy which had reigned in his country up to that time." The most important of Hume's sceptical writings was his "Essay on Miracles," which will be considered in dealing with that subject; but in his "Inquiry concerning the Human Understanding," he discourses on Providence and the future life and the argument for the character of the Deity drawn from the evidences of design in the universe. His position is that of the doubter rather than that of the disbeliever. His views are all based on the general principle of his method, that whatever lies beyond the range of experience is incapable of proof. The next great name to that of Hume is that of *Gibbon* (1737–1794), who appears not as a direct

opponent of Christianity, but as casting a shadow of distrust across the history of its origin and triumphs in his "History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." He, like his great philosophical forerunner, was influenced by the current of French thought; while there is a philosophical contempt for Christianity and a rationalistic spirit in Gibbon's discussion of the origin and spread of the Christian religion, there is a candour and truthfulness which distinguish him from many of his contemporaries, especially from the encyclopædists of France. This is not the place for a criticism of his celebrated chapters xv. and xvi., but it may be remarked that the learned and profound character of his works has led to a vast amount of research and arguments in favour of Christianity which have wonderfully served the cause of truth, and confirmed the faith of Christians.

Before leaving the English school of Deists, there is one name which must not be passed by without mention. *Thomas Paine* was born 1737, and died 1809. "We see in him," says Mr. Farrar, "instead of the polished scholar, the polite man of letters and the historian, like Gibbon, an active man of the sort educated by men rather than books, of low tastes and vulgar tone, the apostle alike of political revolution and infidelity." He brought back with him from America, where he lived for some years in early life, during the War of Independence, a love of political independence, and his work "The Rights of Man," published in 1790, was a reply to Burke's criticisms of the French Revolution. Elected a member of the Convention of Paris, whither he had fled to escape prosecution in England, he published in 1794 "The Age of Reason," in which he promulgated the coarsest infidelity. His last days were spent in America, where his miseries and last sufferings were alleviated by the charitable attention of Christians. His attacks were directed mainly against the positive institutions of Christianity, for which he aimed to substitute the Deist's creed—a personal God, immortality, the natural equality of man, and the law of social justice and benevolence. The influence of his

works has been almost confined to the ranks of extreme social reformers like Robert Owen, and the uneducated masses, the predecessors of modern socialists and secularists.

Reviewing the eighteenth century with respect to the attacks made upon Christianity, it is well to bear in mind the remarks of Mr. Maurice on that period.[1] "There was a decided rebellion among the laymen of the upper classes who aspired to be men of the world, at that time, against the clerical and collegiate lore. Those laymen had a strong suspicion that what the clergy affirmed to be sacred traditions were, for the most part, professional technicalities, which belonged properly to the cell and cloister, and which when they were brought out of them, became a set of maxims not without their use in acting upon the fears and hopes of the vulgar, but which could bear no tests such as men apply to the business of life." John Locke represented that spirit of positivism and practical inquiry, as the philosopher, the philosophical politician, and the enlightened rational Christian. "Whatever he failed to do," says Mr. Maurice, "in one department of thought or another, as a psychologist or politician, he certainly inaugurated a new era of study upon all. The questions which he raised and which he did not settle, respecting the nature of the mind, respecting principles of government, respecting toleration, respecting education, respecting the reasonableness of the Christian religion, were those which the eighteenth century was called to discuss in the gossip of salons, with pen, with bludgeon, with sword, with tears also and prayers." The influence of mathematical and physical research led by Sir Isaac Newton, produced a deeper feeling of the uniformity of Nature, the universality of law, and the value of natural science. And the revival of religion during the century, under the preaching of such men as George Whitefield and John Wesley, stimulated the desire to make the truths of Christianity a treasure of the people and not a guarded secret of priests.

But the intellectual movement which in England took a

[1] "History of Philosophy," vol. iii.

characteristic practical shape, in Germany, among minds of a much more speculative cast, received a more critical direction, which we must now describe. What is called German *Rationalism* was partly the offspring of the philosophical schools of Spinoza and Wolff, and partly the result of a very intimate connection during the last century between the upper classes of Germany and the encyclopædists of France. The controversies of the period succeeding the Reformation produced a reaction of indifference. Pietism, contemporary in Germany with Methodism in England, though effecting some change for the better in the direction of a simple faith, was again followed by a more decided reaction, bringing about a reassertion of the claims of reason and philosophy. *Christian Wolff*, born at Breslau in 1679, died 1754, was an eminent mathematician and devoted to the Church. A follower of the great Leibnitz, whose writings were too learned and profound to be popular, and whose theories, such as those of monads and pre-established harmony, were by no means helpful to the cause of faith, Wolff determined to establish, by an elaborate system of philosophical theology, the creed of the Church on a basis of metaphysics. Although opposed by the Pietists the philosophy of Wolff soon became dominant in Germany. "Its orderly method," says Mr. Farrar, "possessed the fascination which belongs to an encyclopædic view of human knowledge. It coincided, too, with the tone of the age. Really opposed, as Cartesianism has been in France, to the scholasticism which still reigned, its dogmatic form, nevertheless, bore such external similarity to it that it fell in with the old literary tastes. The evil effects which it subsequently produced in reference to religion were due mainly to the point of view which it ultimately induced. Like Locke's work on the Reasonableness of Christianity, it stimulated intellectual speculation concerning revelation. By suggesting attempts to deduce *à priori* the necessary character of religious truths, it turned men's attention more than ever away from spiritual religion to theology. The attempt to demonstrate everything caused dogmas to be viewed

apart from their practical aspects; and men being compelled to discard the previous method of drawing philosophy out of Scripture, an independent philosophy was created, and Scripture compared with its discoveries. Philosophy no longer relied on Scripture, but Scripture rested on philosophy. Dogmatic theology was made a part of metaphysical philosophy. This was the mode in which Wolff's philosophy ministered indirectly to the creation of the disposition to make scriptural dogmas submit to reason, which was denominated Rationalism." [1] Following close upon Wolff came others of the same school, as Baumgarten and Zöllner. And contemporary with the changes of method in theology there was a revival of Biblical criticism and ecclesiastical history, through the labours of such men as Wettstein, J. D. Michaelis, Mosheim, Ernesti, all of whom promoted the growth of a free, scientific spirit in theology.

The leader of rationalistic thought in Germany, however, was Semler (1725–1791), professor at Halle, which was the seat of the pietistic movement. He was a follower of Baumgarten and Ernesti, and imbibed their spirit. "Pure and devout in private character, he was a man," says Hagenbach, "who stood forth with one foot upon the old ground of a solid, pious German and Protestant education, while with the other he stept into the new age, where so much was convulsed that had hitherto remained firm, and at whose portals he himself trembled." Although generally regarded as standing at the head of the eighteenth century Rationalism, yet he himself was less decidedly rationalistic than his successors. He foresaw great dangers from the spirit which he himself was raising. His free treatment of Scripture, and his laboured attempts to dispense with the supernatural, were soon followed up by others in a much bolder and more uncompromising method. At the same time it is important to notice that other influences than those which were strictly religious and theological, were at work on the German mind through the eighteenth century. Literature underwent a marvellous revival, partly through con-

[1] "Critical History of Free Thought," pp. 304–5.

tact with French sources, and partly through the individual stimulus imparted by men of great distinction, as John Gotthold Lessing (1729–1781), and subsequently of the literary school of Weimar, Goethe, Schiller, Wieland, Herder, and others. In some cases literary genius was united with considerable theological influence, as we see in Lessing, who by his publication of the "Wolfenbüttel Fragments" excited a burning controversy between the orthodox school and the school of free thought; and Herder, who while speaking as a friend of truth and a vindicator of the Bible, handled Biblical topics with a freedom which was unusual in a clergyman. But the most powerful influence which affected the German mind during the eighteenth century was the rise of a commanding, philosophical spirit in Immanuel Kant of Königsberg (born 1724, died 1804), who may be said to have effected a complete revolution in the intellectual method of the Continent. Kant never travelled more than a few miles from his professor's chair, but he ruled the world of thought almost despotically by the severity of his logic and the profound penetration of his criticism, while he scattered to the winds a vast amount of shallow, pretentious dogmatism, which had been hiding from men their own ignorance, and really endangering the cause of truth. The title of his great work, "The Critique of Pure Reason," reminds us that the spirit of his method, which became the spirit of his time, was critical and scientific. He demanded an exact account of man's knowledge and capacity of knowledge. On the basis of a criticism of consciousness alone could a structure of certainty be built up. Hume had said we have no other source of knowledge than experience. Condillac had said our mind is nothing but a bundle of transformed sensations. Locke had, in the spirit of common sense, examined the human understanding, and laid the foundations of psychology. But Kant was not satisfied. He demanded a more profound study of the laws of thought, and the result was a system which, while exalting reason, at the same time humbled it; for by placing the great beliefs of man—in God, immortality, and human free-

dom—in the region of the transcendental, it declared them beyond demonstration, and called them back into the practical reason as axiomatic truths or assumptions, which have a *regulative* place in the human mind, but not a *speculative*, being incomprehensible, and involving insoluble contradictions. The great mistake, however, of Kant's system was that he substituted the dictates of the moral nature for the teaching of revelation, regarding the latter as only subsidiary to the former. He attempted to formulate religion within the limits of reason. While therefore Kant did good service to the cause of truth in the way of unsparing criticism of false methods and clear definition of the boundaries of exact knowledge, and nobly asserted the moral law and the necessity of religion, he promoted incalculably the spirit of rationalistic criticism and philosophical theology. Germany, from the time of Kant, has been the chief seat of religious unbelief. It is true that Christianity was vigorously defended. Such names as that of *Euler*, the great mathematician, and of *Haller*, the great naturalist, and of *Schleiermacher*, the great theologian, show that while reason was appealed to by many in the cause of doubt, it was also summoned to the support of a devout and earnest faith. Some of the defenders of Christianity surrendered so many of their old positions that they rather served the cause of the enemy than the cause of truth. Violent means were occasionally resorted to in order to suppress the growing defection. In 1788, a royal edict of the king of Prussia was issued for the maintenance of the old lines of the Protestant confession, but shortly afterwards revoked. But the best remedy for the evil was to leave it to work its own cure by extravagance, and the monstrous absurdities of the school of Paulus produced a healthy reaction in the direction of common sense. In 1799, appeared the celebrated "Discourses on Religion," addressed by Schleiermacher "to its cultivated despisers," aiming to turn away their thoughts from mere critical discussions to the reality of practical religion, which, Schleiermacher maintained, was not knowledge nor morality, but feeling, a right state of the heart.

Christianity claims allegiance as the highest and best of religions. The destructive spirit, however, still survived. The philosophy of Germany, developed by such men as Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, exalted the claims of human reason more and more, until the only foundation required was the laws of thought, which were substituted for all reality, whether it be the reality of God or the reality of the external world. And at the same time with this philosophical idealism we may recognise a rapid development of the school of rationalistic criticism, especially as applied to the study of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures and the early fathers. Such men as De Wette, Gesenius, Knobel, Hitzig, Hirzel, Ewald, and others, have at once distinguished Germany by their profound scholarship and critical acumen, and maintained the spirit of doubt where it was much more difficult to dislodge than in open and daring attempts against the citadel of truth. The eighteenth century closed in gloom over the whole continent. In Germany it was a gloom in the religious world as well as the political.

We must now leave the eighteenth century and briefly sketch the movements of thought in the modern world which have been, and still continue to be, antagonistic to Christian faith. These movements may be described generally as partly philosophical and partly scientific. The Idealism of Germany, represented by the prevalence of Hegelianism and the school which has set the intuitional consciousness, over against the experimental philosophy of a previous period, as the source of knowledge, fascinated some of the acutest minds of Germany with the prospect of applying the doctrine of universal law to all past history as well as to the mysterious facts of the universe, and reducing the whole of the domain of human knowledge and thought to an intellectual system. At the same time science made rapid strides, and the terminology of science by its progressive generalisations satisfied the demand for unity and uniformity, and seemed to drive farther back into the region of traditional faith the so-called supernatural. The early school of Biblical critics who followed in the wake of

De Wette had already begun to take liberties with the text of Scripture and to handle with considerable daring questions of authorship and genuineness. For about a generation the influence of philosophical theologians permeated the German mind, in some cases with more, and in others with less, of sceptical freedom intermingled with it, while the ideal tendency of the prevailing systems was evident in the necessity everywhere felt to give some rational theory of the evolution of actual fact from idea by the working of the laws of thought. At such a crisis it is not wonderful that the many coincident influences of the age should find their expression in one powerful thinker who, sympathising with them and having the genius to put them into shape, has enabled the world to criticise their character and merit in practical application to the problems of faith. The school of Hegel, the philosopher, was divided into three sections, the right, the centre, and the left, according as they were related to the orthodox faith. Those of the left were Rationalists in the extreme sense, rejecting on grounds of reason the personality of God, the doctrine of a future state, and the credibility of the gospel narratives. Among these rationalistic Hegelians appeared David Frederic Strauss, of Tübingen, who by his "Leben Jesu" (Life of Jesus), published in 1835, produced something like a shock through the whole intellectual world. Although only twenty-eight years of age when he thus came before the public mind of Europe, yet there was so much modesty in his spirit, and so much force and pungency in his style, that his book at once drew attention. It put into language thoughts which were vaguely floating in the air. It boldly applied principles which many acknowledged but which most shrunk from carrying out to their fullest extent. This is not the place for an examination of Strauss's theory. It has now been before the world for nearly half a century, and has been shown to be untenable both by an appeal to the facts of history and by the various modifications which it underwent at the hands of its author, which reduced it to a moral paradox, attempting to preserve

ideal truth amid actual falsehood. The effect of Strauss's work upon the Christian argument has been incalculably beneficial. It has led to the most profound study of the early Church and of the New Testament writings throughout, and especially to those numerous attempts to construct into a harmonious whole the materials preserved by the evangelists which, while in no case perfectly satisfactory, have yet wonderfully increased the familiarity of both the world and the Church with the history of our Saviour. One of the most interesting and significant results which flowed from the labours of Strauss was the formation of a school of historical criticism in his own university of Tübingen. We may describe this school of rationalistic critics as headed by Christian Baur (1792–1860), a man of great learning and acuteness, but whose view of Christianity is vitiated by the theory that it is a mere product of Judaism, and that the ecclesiastical form of it was due to the victory of Paulinism over the doctrine of St. Peter and the early Jewish Church, assisted by the union of Christian influence with the power of the declining Roman empire. We shall have occasion in subsequent chapters of this work to estimate the position of the Tübingen school at the present moment in the light of modern critical researches. They have been opposed in their own country with immense learning by such men as Thiersch, Dorner, Lechler, Lange, Bleek, Hase, Bunsen; and some of their latest disciples, as Pfleiderer, have considerably modified their tone and surrendered some of their positions.

Passing now from Germany to France, there are two names which demand a notice in this sketch of the history of unbelief, they are those of *Auguste Comte*, the positivist philosopher, and *Ernest Renan*, the scholar and critic. The principle of the Comtist philosophy is antichristian only in so far as it discards the supernatural as fact, and attempts to substitute an ideal object of reverence in place of a personal God. It is quite unnecessary to disprove *Comtism* as a philosophy, in order to rebut its negation of the essential

positions of the Christian. Its point of view is simply and solely that of science, and it places at the root of its system the law of evolution. It teaches a worship of *humanity*, and substitutes a priesthood of philosophers and men of science in place of the Christian Church. We shall have an opportunity in other chapters of this work to place the Comtist theory of religion in comparison with that of Christianity, and it will be seen how purely unsubstantial and ideal it is, and how much it owes to the philosophic fervour of the mind from which it sprang, in connection with a vast system of generalisations, for any measure of acceptance which it has received from thinking men. As a substitute for the practical doctrines and methods of Christianity, such a merely intellectual system is almost ludicrously inadequate. "None but a book student," says Strauss, in one of his essays, on the Emperor Julian, "could ever imagine that a creation of the brain, woven of poetry and philosophy, can take the place of real religion." *Renan*, who was born in 1833, has been long distinguished as a student of languages and history. In 1845 he published a work on "The History and Comparative System of the Semitic Languages," and from that time to the present has been deeply engaged in philological and critical investigations, as will be seen from the titles of his works: on "The Origin of Language," on "Averroës and Averroism"; on "The Book of Job"; on "Solomon's Song"; "Critical and Moral Essays"; "Studies of Religious History." His main attack upon positive Christianity commenced in his "Life of Jesus," the first of a series of very eloquent and well-studied works on the origins of Christianity (*Les origines du Christianisme*), commenced in 1862, and completed in six volumes, embracing "The Life of Jesus," "The History of the Apostles," "The Life of St. Paul," "Antichrist," "The Gospel," and "The Christian Church." His position is that of Naturalism. He explains away the supernatural somewhat in the spirit of the early rationalists, though with a leaning to the more ideal theory of Strauss. With a poetic sympathy with what he calls "the unequalled epic of the story

of Christianity," he labours to show that its triumphs have been due to the natural greatness of the human soul mingling with the various historical forces which were at work in the Roman empire. He can see no other hope for the world than the development of a moral idealism, such as was exemplified in the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. And he would value Christianity only as furnishing moral symbols to the world. The influence of Kant's philosophy is very evident in his spirit, and the bias of the man of taste and the romanticist unfits him for that profound study of the spiritual mystery of religion and of the character of Christ, without which it is open to the scorn of the superficial and flippant criticism which mocks at what it cannot explain. M. Renan's positions will receive a closer attention in the sequel. Meanwhile it is a matter of sincere regret that a mind so acute and delicate and a nature so evidently full of lively sympathy for all that is noble and pure, having committed itself to the theory of Naturalism and the denial of the miraculous, should steadfastly resist the evidence of Christianity and resort to so much sophistry in attempting to rid itself of the dilemma involved in attributing what is so Divine in its character to human causes. The elaborate work of the French critic on "The Origins of Christianity" is another proof that the history of the Christian Church can be satisfactorily accounted for only on the principle of the Divine origin of Christianity.

While the influence of the rationalistic writers of Germany and France is by no means exhausted, and has appeared in the attacks made upon the Old and New Testaments in our own country by such men as R. W. Mackay, W. R. Greg, F. W. Newman, Bishop Colenso, and a host of others of less note, it may be said that the main stress of unbelief is now taking the philosophical and scientific form rather than the critical and historical. The publication of Mr. J. S. Mill's remarkable posthumous work, "Three Essays on Religion:" on Nature, on the Utility of Religion, and on Theism, in 1874, together with the appearance of Mr. Mill's "Autobiography,"

throwing considerable light on the development of the views which he enunciates, have enabled the Christian advocate to formulate in the language of one of the acutest and clearest thinkers of modern times, the difficulties which are alleged as reasons for rejecting the Christian religion. The position of the modern objector to Christianity is that of the positivist, who demands the exclusion of all that cannot be brought to the test of rational proof from the sphere of human knowledge. As a phenomenon of the human consciousness and history, religion must receive its scientific explanation. Hence the laboured attempts to put Christianity in its exact relation to other religions of the world. The facts are mainly admitted, even by the critical school. The authenticity of the Synoptic Gospels is not overthrown, and that of the four Epistles of St. Paul,—Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians, is not disputed any longer, even by disciples of the Tübingen school. The elaborate attack of the author of "Supernatural Religion" has utterly failed to substantiate any of the critical positions assumed against the New Testament, as we shall see in the course of this work. But the stronghold of unbelief is the apparent contradiction between the theory of the universe, which is supposed to be alone supported by the facts of observation and the careful generalisations of modern science, and the representations of Scripture. We will, therefore, conclude this chapter, which is intended to be introductory to the main subject of the Christian argument, with a few remarks on the present attitude of philosophic and scientific unbelief, and the direct antagonism which is being expressed in many ways both to truths contained in Christianity, and to its mission as a whole.

Looking round upon the whole circle of objectors whose attitude towards Christianity is either that of direct denial or sceptical criticism, it is possible to classify them under the distinctions of the Philosophical Cosmologists, the Physical Theorists, the Rationalistic Critics, the Agnostics, and the Altruistic Secularists. These distinctions may not be preserved entirely in the case of individual writers, in whom

several of the specialities named may be combined; but they will serve the purpose of defining the various tendencies of thought which the Christian advocate is called to recognise. *The philosophical cosmologist* starts from a point of inquiry at which he supposes himself surrounded with a universe of phenomena in cosmical arrangement. He regards it as an assumption on the part of the Theist or the Christian to ascribe these phenomena to a creative intelligence as their First Cause. The philosophy which denies the possibility to human thought of transcending phenomena and reaching the Absolute and the Infinite, which since the time of Kant has been the prevailing philosophy of Europe, forbids the formulating of any theory of the origin of the universe *de nihilo*. The Theist is opposed by the cosmologist, as placing beyond the facts of sense and reason the idea of God, which it is maintained is not given in that which comes under the cognisance of our faculties. But some of the profoundest thinkers of this school, as Mr. Herbert Spencer, and perhaps it might be added Mr. G. H. Lewes and Mr. J. S. Mill, have admitted that there are evidences which are appreciable by the rational faculties of man, of what is called a power beyond phenomena, though there is no possibility of defining or describing that power, nor of substantiating the reality of its existence apart from the universe itself as an effect in time and space. The Theist is invited to a reconciliation with the cosmologist by ceasing to claim rational grounds for his belief in a personal God, and being contented along with the scientist to rest religion on the demand of the feelings and the presuppositions of faith. In like manner the credibility of those parts of Scripture which appear to require what is called the interposition of a direct volition of the Creator in the realm of natural laws, and therefore a contradiction of the absolute uniformity of Nature, are, if not rejected, treated as of a lower worth by the same school, but not because they venture to deny that any variation from the observed uniformity of natural law is possible, but because they assume it to be contradicted by so large an amount of

experience as to be incredible. In other words, cosmologically a miracle is an unphilosophical denomination of an unexplained fact. Either the narrative is a misrepresentation, or the phenomena, if admitted, are reducible to some laws known or unknown which are involved in the existence of the cosmos. It will be evident that the opposition of this school to the theistic side of Christianity resolves into a counter assertion of a theory of the universe which is supposed to be irreconcilable with the conception of a personal God and His direct action in Nature. Whether the underlying principle of such a theory be evolution or any other form of development, the objector to Theism must have his substitute for the idea of God. He must have his conception of the universe. If he will not admit that it rests on a personal Being, then he must suppose it an eternal process of development, and his theory really amounts to this : that phenomena are not the *secondary* facts of which *personality* is the *primary* support, but are the ultimate affirmations of the human mind ; that man is the measure of all things and no other measure must be introduced. How such a position can be maintained long it is difficult to see. The human mind can never be satisfied with an eternal process, a succession of antecedents and consequents, as its solution of the mystery of the universe. The admission that all that philosophy and science can do is to certify the existence of cosmical phenomena, is to relegate the question of origins to some other source of knowledge. So that the effort of this school of thought is simply to separate the affirmations of Theism and Christianity from the definitions of the cosmologist and consider them in another sphere of conception altogether. Admitting the idea of a cosmos or universe arranged and in order, the question really is, what is included in that cosmos? The *assumption* is not on the Theist's side when he says, I find there the evidence of the existence of God ; it is on the philosopher's side, when he says, there is nothing to be known beyond that which can be brought under the test of scientific demonstration and definition.

Another form of opposition to the teachings of Christianity is that of the *physical theorists*, who in their different departments of scientific inquiry put the results of their observation and generalisation into definite shape, into a principle, or an hypothesis, or a system of facts, which, it is maintained, traverses the creed of Christians and makes it incredible. The atomic theory of matter, the principle of evolution or development, the cosmogony which has been deduced from the nebular theory, the immense antiquity of the human race on the earth, the physiological investigations into the correlation of mind and matter in the organism, and many other specialities of modern science into which it would be an anticipation of the subsequent pages of this work to enter at this stage, are being held up against the statements of Scripture as inconsistent with them, and in many minds are shaking the confidence which they have maintained in the possibility of vindicating the Christian view of man and the universe, undermining the idea of sin and the necessity for redemption, and the possibility of a future state in which individual men will possess an identical consciousness. While many of the highest scientists of the age are sincere believers in Christianity, many others, if not in the position of openly rejecting it, and speaking scornfully of its doctrines, are ready to think that faith is not a matter of evidence and argument, but simply of feeling. They are perplexed because they hesitate to affirm strongly what they fear may be disproved. They preserve an ominous silence, and the cause of truth suffers, because many are led to conclude that it is indefensible. But to the candid mind this transition stage of thought is exceedingly trying and unsatisfactory. We must absolutely refuse as Christians to accept theories for facts and systems for permanent and indestructible certainties. The Christian is not bound to reconcile his Bible or his faith with anything but the universe itself *as it is*, not as men *interpret* it. Science is an interpretation of the universe, just as theology is an interpretation of revelation. Both may be wrong, and inconsistent because they are wrong. If to be a

Darwinist necessitates the rejection of Christianity, then indeed the two positions must be compared, and the choice of the whole man, reason, conscience, heart, soul, life, must decide. But it is only the dogmatism of science which assumes its theories to be demonstrated and makes them an absolute test of truth. The course of human progress is a perpetual revision of the past and preparation for novelty. The cautious thinker, whether on the side of Christianity or on the side of its opponents, will renounce no position until it can be held no longer, and will listen to all contemporary voices, remembering that they are the voices of fallible men and not the utterances of absolute truth.

Closely allied with the school of scientists is that of the rationalist critics. The Tübingen centre of this tendency may be said, perhaps, to have exhausted itself in Strauss and Baur, but there is a large amount of critical writing disseminated in the present day which is the offspring of that centre, although not repeating in exact shape its positions. The main principle of the historical criticism which has attacked the authenticity of the sacred writings, and aimed at explaining the early history of Christianity from a naturalistic point of view, is the elimination of all that cannot be reduced to the level of acknowledged laws of the physical world and of human consciousness. The books of Scripture are examined, not simply on the basis of external evidence, but on the supposed fitness of the matter and style to a preconceived theory of the writer's character and position. The facts of Christian history are to be treated like all other facts, no element being included in them which cannot be scientifically accounted for. If it be admitted that Christianity triumphed over heathenism, the causes of that triumph are to be sought in the relative positions of the Christian society and the heathen world. If a book like the Fourth Gospel contains in it words and phrases which correspond with the technical language of the Alexandrian school and the early Gnostics, it is to be taken for granted that all explanations of the use of

such terms by the apostle John before the close of the first century are shifts of the Christian argument, not fair admission of facts. If there is an apparent development of doctrine in the later Epistles of St. Paul, which have supplied ecclesiastical minds with pleas for a system of Church authority only pronounced at the end of the second or beginning of the third century, that is to be sufficient warrant for rejecting such epistles as spurious, notwithstanding all internal and external evidence of their Pauline authorship. A theory must be at all costs hazarded of the origin of the New Testament and of the Christian Church which will coincide with the principles of the modern philosophy and science. Evidently such a mode of dealing with ancient documents and facts is a violent *petitio principii.* If Christianity is a phenomenon which can be naturally explained, then let it be so, but if the modern critical school has utterly failed to present anything like a tenable theory of the case to be examined, on the basis of mere natural law, then the reaction from such failures is to confirm the position of the Christian believer: "We have not followed cunningly devised fables."

But may not the benefit of the doubt be in favour of unbelief? Mr. J. S. Mill seems to claim the right of an *agnostic* position, *i.e.*, of one which holds off from the Christian theses as unproven. After a long array has been set forth,—in his work on Religion,—of objections to the various elements of the Christian creed, he commences that portion of his work which he heads "General Result" with the following words: "From the result of the preceding examination of the evidences of Theism, and (Theism being presupposed) of the evidences of any revelation (he should rather say, '*objections to*' than '*evidences of*'), it follows that the rational attitude of a thinking mind towards the supernatural, whether in natural or in revealed religion, is that of scepticism, as distinguished from belief on the one hand and from atheism on the other; including, in the present case, under atheism, the negative as well as the positive form of disbelief in a God, viz., not only the dogmatic

denial of His existence, but the denial that there is any evidence on either side, which for most practical purposes amounts to the same thing as if the existence of a God had been disproved. If we are right in the conclusions to which we have been led by the preceding inquiry, there is evidence, but insufficient for proof, and amounting only to one of the lower degrees of probability."[1] This very well expresses the position of the agnostic. He is not satisfied with the evidence, and he is more than satisfied that the objections which have so much weight in his own mind cannot be removed. But there is a lower degree of probability which it is admitted is the result. May we not fairly ask that that which can be raised even in the face of the strongest objections to, at all events, a low degree of probability should still remain an open question? That which satisfies one mind fails to satisfy another, where scientific demonstration is impossible. The variety of forces in the evidence is a reason for regarding that evidence as matter for reconsideration, not for rejecting it. When a scientific theory is first propounded it generally fails to convince many who give it an examination, and yet the result of time and study may be to make arguments satisfactory which at first had but little force. The fact that many evidences which a mind like J. S. Mill's puts aside as weak and worthless, meeting with a more decided form of the religious sentiment do carry conviction, is a reason for regarding the position of the agnostic as greatly the result of certain habits of thought and certain principles of philosophy, which ought to distinguish him as an exceptional, and not a representative, human mind. In the term agnostic is included the term gnosis or knowledge. The agnostic says, I do not and cannot know these things to be true. The reply must be, Then your theory of knowledge and your test of truth are the cause of your agnosticism. Revise that theory and criticise that test, and it may be your agnosticism will disappear and give place to faith. There is no position of moral truth which cannot be criticised in the same manner as the

[1] Page 242.

positions of the Christian are criticised by Mr. Mill. There is no probability which guides our life which cannot be reduced to a low degree by such methods of reasoning. Truth must be admitted to be growing into light out of a fathomless depth of mystery, but, as St. Paul tells us, "*that which may be known of God is manifest*" (Rom. i. 19). To protest that "*we do not know*," is no reason either against the study of the evidence of religion or against practical acceptance of its dictates. The agnostic position cannot honestly be any more than one of doubt and inquiry. The only true sceptic is he who asks for light.

It only remains to describe one other form of antagonism to Christianity, which to a certain extent may be said to combine all the others, as it is rather practical than theoretic. The *altruistic secularist* denies positively the truths of religion. He may do so on philosophical, or scientific, or critical grounds; or he may do so on all and every ground which he can find to stand upon. Being a decided disbeliever, he must substitute for religion some other basis of morality without which he admits that the social needs of man cannot be met. He assumes the adaptation of human nature to the facts of the universe so far as the life of man is concerned. He takes for granted that the apparent disproportion between the world and man is real and inevitable. He renounces all hope of individual victory over Nature and the continuance of individual existence beyond this life. His morality is a translation into what are called moral principles of the law of pleasure and pain, in short of utility without a definition of the good beyond that of the greatest amount of pleasure. His position as a member of the human race and of society demands the recognition of fellow-creatures and the suppression of selfishness. His enthusiasm, if he has any, is for the race. His highest motive is the development of mankind. Doubtless this is a position which has its relieving features of sentiment and its possibilities of good, but that it should be intellectually sustained is a contradiction, for it builds morality on a basis which is insufficient to sustain it; and that it should resist the force of human

corruption, and should be powerful enough to overcome the evil of the world, is contrary to all experience and a transparent absurdity. It is the last resort of ingenious minds which are not prepared to leap into the abyss of sensualism, which cling tenaciously to the remnant of moral truth left in them, but which do not recognise the result of their own atheism—*aut Deus aut Diabolus.* A universe without a presiding intelligence is not in any true sense a moral universe. A human nature which is the only moral thing in the universe must worship itself, and the end of such worship of humanity is devilism, the pride which will rather reign in hell than serve in heaven.

PART II.

THEISM.

CHAPTER I.

REVIEW OF THEISTIC ARGUMENTS.

THE first subject with which we are concerned in dealing with the evidences of the Christian religion, must necessarily be the fundamental position which is assumed in all worship, the personal existence of Him who is the object of worship. In many works of great apologists, such as those of Butler and Paley, it is presupposed that religion is the reasonable requirement of a being conscious of his relation to his Creator. But in the present day we are summoned to the defence of the primary truth, that the universe has proceeded from an intelligent and self-conscious Author with whom man is capable of holding the relations of knowledge and fellowship. If we employ the term religion to denote merely the higher emotions of human nature seeking an object, without the central conception which forms the substance of the Christian doctrine, the existence of one Supreme Being in whom all things subsist and without whom nothing is what it is, and to whose perfect will all action must be referred, as the governing power of the universe, then we are confusing language. There may be an elevation of the faculties and feelings by their objects, as in the case of the artist seeking the beautiful, or the student of Nature and philosophy inquiring after the true knowledge of the things around him, or the benevolent philanthropist filled with an

"enthusiasm of humanity," aiming at an ideal of human existence which he places on the throne of his thoughts, and which produces within him a reverential feeling akin to worship; but in all these instances, and others like them, it is an abuse of terms to speak of the desires and aspirations excited as religious. God is not their object. Religion is based upon a distinct affirmation. There is an object of worship to whom that worship is due, and by whom it is really received. And the Christian religion rests on *Theism* in its only consistent expression, which is that of *monotheism;* for behind every system of *polytheism* there is always the idea that the many gods are representatives of one superhuman principle which takes many shapes as objects of worship. The polytheist has an immature and confused thought of God as an invisible power. He sees the presence of that power manifested in the visible objects round him, or he tries to embody his conception of it or its agency in an idolatrous representation; but underlying all his polytheism there is the intimate conviction that man is subject to higher powers, which are supposed manifold and diverse, because the mind of the polytheist has not clearly grasped the conception of a universe centred in one personal Being. Again, there is a large class of thinkers, of the speculative and philosophical cast, who in the present day would substitute for the doctrine of "*one living and true God*" certain rational formulæ with which they attempt to summarise the generalisations of science and metaphysical thought. *Religion* is lowered to a mere *idealism*, that is to *morality*, the foundation of which is made to be an idea, an idea which is lofty or low according to the particular theory which selects it. In one case the idea in view is a *cosmical perfection* to be realized by a stream of tendency under the guidance of a power not ourselves which makes for righteousness or order; in another case it is simply the idea of humanity, as distinct from and inclusive of individual men. And there are those who would substitute for religion the mere observance of the laws of man's present existence as phenomenal, without the admission of any ultimate

standard of truth and duty, without the thought of continued personal existence after death, without the acceptance of any ideal of humanity to be the inspiration of desire and the guide of endeavour. Against such blind assaults upon the position of the Christian Theist, it might be enough to plead the argument of a *reductio ad absurdum*, and by a criticism of the language employed by these theorists, show that they have utterly failed to meet the demands of the human mind on the subject. But our position is not a merely negative one. We claim the acceptance of Theism as a positive doctrine of the universe. We are not content with saying there may be a God, —reason dare not deny the personal existence of the Supreme Being,—but we go much further, and affirm that "the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." That is the Christian position. The aim of this review of the theistic argument is not to show that that position is unassailable by logic or demonstrable in any one of its particulars, but that it is a position which is firm enough and large enough to sustain the edifice of the Christian religion as an appeal to faith and practice. Before stating the various arguments for the existence of God, however, it will be necessary to clear the ground by explaining what the Theist undertakes to prove, as distinct from other conceivable theories of the universe, and with what kind of evidence he seeks to prove it, for there is some misunderstanding occasionally in those who attack the affirmations of Christianity, for lack of a clear statement of the Christian conception of God, and of the nature of that certain knowledge which is claimed. There is a considerable advance in modern thought in the definition of the boundaries of knowledge and the relations between reason and faith.

When we ask ourselves what is included under the word "God," as it is employed by the Theist, as distinct from the atheist, and without reference to the special doctrines of the Divine nature which are due to the revelations of Christianity,

the simplest answer which can be given is, *the Infinite Being*, from whom all things and all beings have come and in whom they subsist. We conceive all the attributes of physical, intellectual, and moral perfection, in absolute, unlimited extent, and in entire harmony of relation to one another, in one personality or spirit, who, as the Infinite Being, exists eternally, is omnipresent, and is the source and substance of all power in the universe; who, as Creator, is infinitely wise and good, and who, though to the minds of His creatures He is "past finding out," still as the head of all things in which there is manifestly wisdom and goodness, is Himself necessarily above all, and therefore the object of ceaseless reverence and love. Now it is well to state at this point a distinction which is at times neglected. It has been remarked by Mr. J. S. Mill, in his criticism on the writings of Sir William Hamilton, that the mere existence in the human mind of the ideas of infinity in its various applications, as infinite time, that is, eternity, infinite space, infinite power, wisdom, goodness, is no proof that there exists a Being in whom these ideas of the human mind are realities. Seeing that it is an impossibility and contradiction that a being, limited and imperfect as man, should possess in his thought the conception of the infinite or the absolute in any but a negative sense, that is, as the converse of that which he actually conceives, the finite, he can only say that the law of his thought suggests the infinite. But our idea of God is not merely the idea of *the Infinite*, but the idea of *the Infinite Being or Personality, or Spirit*, who in various ways manifests His existence, agency and character to His creatures. If it be denied that there is reasonable ground for believing in the existence of such a Being, then the position of denial must either be that of *pure scepticism*, that is, of denial of the *proof* but not of the *thesis*, which still therefore remains an open question; or that of *atheism* in one of its many forms, that is, a theory of the universe which substitutes for the conception of "*the living God*" some other idea of the *first principle* or explanation of the fact of existence. We can distinguish only these three

possible positions: *The Theist* says, There is *one living and true God*, the *Creator*, and *Ruler*, and *Preserver* of all things, to whose *intelligence*, *power*, *character*, *will*, the universal order and development which we behold are to be referred. *The sceptic* says, Neither to my reason nor to my heart is there satisfaction brought sufficient to enable me to make the affirmation of the Theist. There may be a God such as he believes,—many reasons have weight in them which are given for that thesis,—but doubt still remains, and the conception is still only theoretic, with a partial, not complete, confirmation of rational evidence or moral persuasion. *The atheist* goes further. He puts forward a theory of the universe which excludes the personal existence of God, and therefore he is an opponent of Theism. He assumes a unity of existence under the variety of appearances, but he denies that we have any proof of that unity being spiritual. There is nothing but that which can be supposed to be the support of material phenomena, therefore we cannot believe in anything but those material phenomena, and whatever explains them, which need not be immaterial, and therefore may be called *material*. This is the position of *materialistic atheism*. Then again, admitting that there is mind as well as matter in the universe, however we arrange them, whether as coincident or as successive, matter originating mind or mind originating matter, all that we can call *infinite* is the cosmos, the totality of existence with its laws. We are in the midst of that totality, we are like a star in the great system of the heavenly bodies, kept in our place by a complex operation of innumerable forces acting according to fixed laws. All that we can affirm is that the whole is infinite, and that infinitude we place at the head of the universe as supreme and worthy of all our reverence and obedience, and, if it pleases to give to the cosmic emotions such a name, religious worship. This is the position of *pantheistic atheism*. It may present many forms, but it can never cease to be *atheistic*. The idea of the cosmos is not the idea of a personal God, on whom the cosmos rests, and for whom it exists. The only other alternative to *Theism* which it is neces-

sary to mention is what is called *Polytheism*, that is the belief in many gods, but as that is logically inconsistent with Theism and with itself, it is only in an improper sense that the word is admissible. The idea of God in the term Polytheism is not the same as in the term Theism. In the former case it is that of finite beings, called gods because they are *superhuman*, not because they are *supreme*. In the latter case the name God denotes one Supreme Being to whom all other beings are subordinate. Polytheism, when it is examined historically and mythologically, bears witness to an antecedent conception in the human mind of the superhuman or supernatural, which in its highest form is the conception of the supreme. It is admitted by scientific sceptics like Mr. J. S. Mill that the effect of the elevation of human thought and scientific progress is to abolish polytheism and substitute monotheism for it, which is the same as admitting that the conception of monotheism is more in harmony with reason, observation, and the laws of thought. Although we speak of polytheistic *religion*, the fact is that all the religions of the world, however degraded, are a witness of the human soul against polytheism and for Theism, for they prove that man must have an object of worship, and yet that he himself, as a finite and sense-bound creature, cannot place before his own mind and heart the true object, which can satisfy the "religious instinct," but only as he is led, whether by revelation or in any other way, to monotheism, does he find the true idea and form of religion.

But now the question remains to be answered: Is Theism, as thus distinguished from Scepticism, Atheism, Polytheism, capable of proof? And before we enter upon a consideration of the arguments, it will be a necessary preparation to describe the nature of the evidence which we are about to adduce, and which is available in the controversy. Can we answer to those who attempt to undermine our position by denying that we can know anything worth calling knowledge on such a subject, that *our knowledge of God is a true knowledge*, and that it is based upon evidence which is worthy of acceptance by a

rational being; in other words, is it evidence which appeals to man as man, and not merely to the Christian as a dogmatist, or to faith as a mystic principle, above or apart from the laws of thought, and the laws of the universe as they are ascertained in accordance with those laws of thought? To this further introductory question we must now address ourselves. "The most important quality of an opinion on any momentous subject," says Mr. J. S. Mill, "is its truth or falsity, which to us resolves itself into the sufficiency of the evidence on which it rests."[1] That is an undoubted position; but when we speak of *evidence* as *sufficient*, the question is immediately suggested *to whom* sufficient? and *in what sense* sufficient? That which satisfies the reason of the scientific man cultivated in his own scientific logic, altogether fails *per se* to convince one who is not trained in that logic. He accepts the dicta of science simply on authority, *i.e.*, because he believes that those who put forth those dicta do so on sufficient evidence. That which is sufficient evidence for a Christian, or one whose moral nature has been trained in sympathy with Christianity, is not sufficient for a mind like Mr. Mill's, trained in the atmosphere of scepticism. Now the whole of what we call *human knowledge* must depend for its certainty on the knowing faculties of man. Knowledge is a relation in which one side is the knowing faculty, the other side is the known object. In the case of some branches of knowledge (so called), as, *e.g.*, mathematics and pure science of all kinds, the certainty which is attained is due to the reasoning being in abstract matter, concerning itself with ideas which the mind assumes to be primary, and laws of thought which are pure and universal. But instantly that we leave that region of the pure intellect and apply our conclusions to an objective world, we are compelled to admit that our perfect certainty is gone. Mr. Mill remarks that "it is indispensable that the subject of religion should from time to time be reviewed as a strictly scientific question, and that its evidences should be tested by the same scientific methods, and

[1] "Essays on Religion," p. 128.

on the same principles as those of any of the speculative conclusions shown by physical science. It being granted, then, that the legitimate conclusions of science are entitled to prevail over all opinions, however widely held, which conflict with them, and that the canons of scientific evidence, which the successes and failures of two thousand years have established, are applicable to all subjects on which knowledge is attainable, let us consider what place there is for religious beliefs on the platform of science, what evidences they can appeal to, such as science can recognise, and what foundation there is for the doctrines of religion, considered as scientific theorems." To this it is only needful to reply, that religion, not demanding a place on the "scientific platform," ought not to be pushed there; nor ought doctrines of religion ever to be turned into scientific theorems in order to be rightly judged. But beyond this it must be remembered that science itself, the moment it deals with realities, becomes a realm of uncertainty, and not a criterion of truth. Take, *e.g.*, the scientific doctrine of Matter. Admitting that there are certain formulæ which, so far as experience goes, can be relied upon as scientifically proved, still the question, what is matter? what is gravitation? what are the laws of Nature, beyond laws of the human mind in looking at Nature?—cannot be answered by science. Science rests itself on assumptions, on the use of terms which represent absolute mysteries. Its observations of fact are admittedly subject to correction. Its theories are mere attempts to comprehend facts in the grasp of generalisation, which cannot be proved to be a grasp holding all things within it. There are realms of fact to which science is only very little applicable. Such are the facts of human history, human action, social relations, the moral consciousness. It cannot be denied that the facts of these regions are as truly facts as those of the material world. Yet there is nothing worth calling a science of this moral region, at all comparable in exactness and force of conclusions with the physical sciences. And yet it is only by a perverse misuse of terms that the scientist claims *knowledge* for his

department of thought, and denies it to the region of the moral consciousness. All that he can fairly claim is that the facts with which he deals, and as he deals with them, can be referred to the laws of thought more directly and more completely than other facts. An apple falls to the ground; that fact can be regarded, and is regarded, by the scientist, as a *simple fact* under the law of gravitation. As such it can be dealt with, with a strictness of logic and generalisation, which gives the air of certainty to the conclusions drawn. But it is by an assumption that the whole reasoning is carried forward. The apple falling is a fact isolated from many other facts with which in reality it is intimately connected. The apple fell because the tree was shaken; the tree was shaken because the wind blew; the wind blew because there were atmospheric changes at work; and so forth, through an endless realm of action and interaction, in which it is not true to say there are only material antecedents and consequents, for it is the testimony of consciousness that there are other, inevitable facts, which cannot be scientifically tested. In short, the universe is a whole only partially observed and understood by man, and science is a test of truth only in a limited region and to a limited extent. To make a relative standard into an absolute standard is a dogmatism which is intolerable and self-destructive. "You may deny," says Dr. Martineau,[1] "the ideas of *the Infinite* and *the Eternal* as not *clear;* and clear they are not, if nothing but the mental picture of an outline can deserve that word. But if a thought is clear when it sits apart without danger of being confounded with another, when it can exactly keep its own in speech and reasoning, without forfeiture and without encroachment; if, in short, logical clearness consists not in the idea of a limit but in the limit of the idea, then no sharpest image of any finite quantity, say of a circle or an hour, is clearer than the thought of the Infinite and the Eternal. Or finally, will you perhaps admit these to their proper honours as mere *thoughts*—positive

[1] "Phil. Essays," vol. i. p. 194.

thoughts, clear thoughts, but deny to them the character of knowledge? This course is open to you on one condition: that you restrict the word '*knowledge*' to the discrimination of phenomena from one another, and refuse it to the discrimination of them from their ground. We have no guarantee for any differentiation at all, except in the assumed veracity of our perceptive and logical faculties, and that guarantee we have alike for all. The charge of nescience, advanced on the plea of the relativity of our knowledge, is double-edged and cuts both ways. True it is that the infinite, discharged of all relation to the finite, could never come into our apprehension; but it is no less true that the finite, discharged of all relations to the infinite, is incognisable too." The knowledge which lies at the basis of religion is, like all other human knowledge, a relation between the faculties and their object. The certainty aimed at is that which is produced when the faculties, intellectual or moral, being genuinely exercised, arrive at what we call *conclusions;* that is, are able to say, to me and to all who employ the same faculties in the same respect to the laws of thought, such and such is truth. The evidences, which are of many kinds, are in no case of such a nature as to leave the mind nothing but a deductive step from the universal to the particular, from an undisputed premise to a conclusion brought under it, which would be to exclude faith and make religion a mere formal process of the mind. But the end of all moral truth being to act upon the will, the evidence is of a character in which the certainty is the *assured conviction* of truth, rather than its *formal demonstration.* Sufficient it is for the demands of a moral and responsible creature.

We now proceed to describe the arguments which have been employed to prove the existence of a personal God. They are of many kinds, and have been classified under the division *à priori* and *à posteriori*, according to the character of the reasoning, as *deductive* from necessary, axiomatic truth of the reason, or *inductive* from the generalisations made by means of observation and experience. This classification, however, is

not satisfactory, for the two processes of reasoning are so intermingled in every argument that what is called an *à priori* argument is not strictly limited to deduction, and what is called an *à posteriori* argument must necessarily include in it *à priori* elements. It is difficult to conceive how an *à priori* argument for the existence of God, in its strictest form, can be anything else than a play of words. We cannot make the existence of the Infinite Being the second term of an argument without bringing our idea of that existence under a larger idea, that of absolute existence, which either is to resolve our reasoning into an identical proposition, A = A, or to involve ourselves in a logical contradiction, absolute existence being the proof of the Infinite Being, because the Infinite Being is taken to be a lower term than absolute existence, which is to reduce the infinite to the finite. So, again, in all so-called *à posteriori* arguments there are *à priori* assumptions. When we generalise, we bring particular facts under laws of the reason, and in reasoning "*from Nature up to Nature's God*," we introduce into the observed sequences of phenomena the *à priori* ideas which form the steps of our ascent to the summit of our thought, the Supreme Personality. The two methods of argument are mingled together, because man himself is a creature, as Milton has described him, "*of large discourse, looking before and after.*" He is at once finite and infinite; *i.e.*, his consciousness lays hold at once of the region of *perception* and of the region of *intuition*, of the facts of experience and of that underlying and surrounding mystery of the infinite which, while it is the necessary in thought, is yet the undefinable and incomprehensible. Without attempting to sustain the broad division of *à priori* and *à posteriori*, there is another arrangement of theistic arguments which, having the authority of Kant, the great philosopher of Königsberg, has been widely adopted since his time. It is that into three principal classes: I. The *ontological*, or metaphysical. II. The *cosmological*, or argument from causation. III. The *physico-theological or teleological*, or that from the evidences of design in the

universe to the existence of a ruling intelligence. To this may be added another division: IV. The *anthropological*, which, while not logically separable from the last, is yet conveniently considered apart, as including many arguments which are not, strictly speaking, teleological, those from the facts of human consciousness and history.

I. *The ontological, or purely metaphysical argument.* This is of little value, as it is only in the region of abstractions that it can be said to be sustainable. The science of ontology, or the philosophy of being in the abstract (τὸ ὄν), at one time, especially among the schoolmen of the middle ages, occupied much attention. But it is a purely analytical science, taking the thoughts of the mind to pieces and classifying them, but adding nothing to the knowledge of man, of what is beyond his own mind. "The human mind," says Dr. Mansel,[1] "possesses no positive notion answering to the term existence or being in general; and it follows that there can be no law of human reason which can indicate any necessary results involved in such a notion, and no fact of human experience which can give rise to a corresponding intuition. Every existence which we can perceive, is definite and particular, limited and related; and every existence of which we can think [that is, in the sense of presentative thought, conception], is definite and particular, limited and related likewise. It must therefore needs be that a science which starts from the assumption of being in the abstract (which is not a conception but an equivocal term, capable of relation to many distinct conceptions), and attempts by pure deduction and division to reason down to the concrete existences which alone are objects of *positive* thought, must end by delivering not differences of things, but distinctions of words." We may also refer to the criticism of Kant on the ontological argument in his "Critique of Pure Reason."[2] "It is evident," he says, "from what has been said,

[1] "Metaphysics," pp. 283–4.
[2] Meiklejohn's Translation, Book II. ch. iii. § 4.

that the conception of an absolutely necessary being is a mere idea, the objective reality of which is far from being established by the mere fact that it is a need of reason. All the examples adduced have been drawn without exception from *judgments* and not from *things*. But this unconditioned necessity of a judgment does not form the absolute necessity of a thing." The chief importance of the metaphysical arguments for the existence of God does not lie in their metaphysical validity, but in their testimony to the tendency of human thought. If it can be shown that the reason is led towards the conception of the absolute and the unconditioned and the infinite, while that does not demonstrate the existence of the Infinite Being, it certainly proves that the idea of such a Being is not inconsistent with, but rather coincident with, the tendency of human thought. The metaphysical argument may be summarised in a few words. An idea of God is in my mind. That idea of God must be a necessary idea or a factitious idea. If a necessary idea, that is, one which my reason, as reason, includes, although I am not able to account for it and speculatively prove it to have any other origin than the law of my own thought, still is not existence a necessary constituent of it, *i.e.*, am I not compelled to think of the infinite, the absolute, the eternal, as a Being? Even if these positions be sustained, the reply might be made, but what is proved more than the existence of an idea? How do you pass from the subjective to the objective, from the necessity of thought to the necessity of being? In the middle ages the Realism of Plato, mingled with the Aristotelian logic, produced a metaphysical and partly mystical theology, which delighted in attempting answers to such questions; but they were little better than reasonings in a vicious circle, the existence of God being assumed to prove the validity and truthfulness of human reason, and then human reason being called in to prove the existence of God. Realism and Nominalism struggled long for supremacy, but Realism triumphed in the theological schools of Europe. We have already referred to *Anselm*, born at Aosta in Piedmont in 1033 (or 4),

died 1109. He perhaps may be called the originator of the metaphysical argument for the existence of God, although he was not a philosopher, but a theologian. In his "Monologium" or Soliloquy, and "Proslogium" or Alloquy, he attempts to prove, in a Platonic spirit, that there must be an infinite Being because there is in man the idea of such a Being, and that man's true position is that of appeal to such a Being to reveal Himself. There is in the human intellect, says Anselm, the idea of a Being than whom nothing greater can be conceived. If so, it cannot be in the intellect alone, for if it is in the intellect it may be conceived of as being also in reality, and if it be not a reality, then it is greater in the intellect than it is in reality; that is, the intellect which conceives the Divine, is itself Divine. "*Existit ergo procul dubio aliquid, quo majus cogitari non valet, et in intellectu et in re.*" God cannot be thought not to be. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." But that saying is thinking, and that thinking presupposes existence. We must necessitate existence in our idea of God, or it is not a perfect idea. To this Kant replied: "We are unable to form the slightest conception of a thing which, when annihilated in thought with all its predicates, leaves behind a contradiction; and contradiction is the only criterion of impossibility in the sphere of pure *à priori* conceptions." Anselm confounded logical existence with real existence. He assumed the point to be proved, that the testimony of human consciousness is the criterion of absolute truth. The argument *as à priori* is of no real value, because it simply says that what is, is, or that what must be, is. Mansel observes: "The actual existence of an object can never be shown by thinking about it; for imaginary objects are as capable of being represented in thought as real ones. Reality must be tested not by thought, but by intuition." But taking the argument as *à posteriori*, *i.e.*, as an induction from consciousness, the force of it, though not demonstrative, is yet by no means inconsiderable, for if I am necessitated to think of God, and that thought is confirmed by other evidences, I

may well believe that that necessity is derived from the universe and not from myself alone.

The next example of the *à priori* or metaphysical argument is that of Descartes, born at La Haye in France, in 1590, and studied in Holland, whither he repaired in 1629. Shut up in almost absolute solitude for twenty years, Descartes made it his aim to found an entirely original philosophical system on the principle of an appeal to consciousness, taking as his motto the famous dictum "*Cogito, ergo sum.*" Doubt is the only path to knowledge, that is, doubt of the dogmas and affirmations of the past. The essence of the soul is Thought. In consciousness there are ideas, some innate, others acquired, some partially self-originated. The idea of God is in the mind. It is innate. I think, therefore I am. The clear consciousness of an idea necessitates the reality of it. In myself is doubt. Doubt is imperfection. Therefore the idea of God must be the idea of a not-self, of a perfect Being. We cannot connect together the idea of a perfect Being and the idea of nothingness. Nor can a perfect Being depend upon an imperfect, any more than something can proceed from nothing. "What remained was that this idea should have been put into me by a Nature which was verily more perfect than I was, and which had all the perfection of which I could have an idea, that is to say, to explain myself in one word, which was God."[1] Or, taking the idea of God in the mind, it contains necessary existence in it. The argument is therefore twofold: *First.* The idea of God is the idea of the Infinite. It cannot therefore have come from the finite. Hence there must be an Infinite. *Second.* The idea of God involves the idea of necessary existence. A reality corresponding to it is therefore necessary. The following remarks from the "De Methodo," will exemplify Descartes' method of reasoning. "That the things which we conceive very clearly and very distinctly are all true, is only trustworthy because God is or exists, and that He is a perfect

[1] "De Methodo," p. 23.

Being, and that all that is in us comes from Him. Whence it follows that our ideas or notions being real things, and coming from God in so far forth as they are clear and distinct, cannot be other than true. Wherefore if we have often some ideas and notions which contain falsity, this must be predicated of those which have something in them that is confused and obscure, they in so far participate in nothingness; that is to say, that the notions in us are only confused because we are imperfect. And it is surely no less a contradiction that falsity or imperfection, as such, should proceed from God, than that truth or perfection should proceed from nothingness. But if we did not know that all that is in us which is real and true comes from a perfect and infinite Being, how clear and distinct soever our ideas were we should have no reason to assure us that they had the perfection of being true."[1] Descartes was a mathematician, and scarcely recognised that the reasonings which were of force in abstract truth, were of no avail in passing from the abstract to the concrete. It is very true that while Descartes assumed the position of an *à priori* reasoner his real meaning was that consciousness is the only basis on which we can rest. He desired to point out that our belief in God is a belief in the veracity of human consciousness, and that the rejection of the idea is a distrust of our own nature, which is akin to insanity. Mr. Maurice has observed that his appeal was from himself as an individual to that common humanity which he shared with all men, and he certainly did good service in showing that we cannot as men rid ourselves of the idea of God. But metaphysically this method of reasoning is defective. We show that the Infinite Being is a possibility in thought, no more; we assume His existence and perfection to give us that basis of confidence in the truth of our ideas on which we build up the argument for His being. "The merchant may as well hope to increase his wealth by the addition of noughts to his cash account, as the ontological reasoner

[1] "De Methodo," p. 24.

to increase the stock of real knowledge by the aid of mere ideas."[1]

After the time of Descartes and Locke considerable attention was given to the *à priori* argument, particularly after the appearance of Spinoza's pantheistic system. One of the ablest attempts to present the argument in a complete form was that of Dr. Samuel Clarke, who delivered the Boyle Lectures in 1704–5. The title of his work is itself significant: "A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God, more particularly in answer to Mr. Hobbes, Spinoza, and their followers." Clarke was a follower of Sir Isaac Newton, and himself a very able mathematician. His reasoning is close and acute, but is not what he calls it, "a demonstration." The following is an outline of Clarke's argument:

1. Admitting that something now is, it must have a cause, a reason, a ground of its existence. That ground of its existence must be in the necessity of its own nature, or in the existence of some other being; in either case we must assume existence as eternal. Something has existed from eternity—*Ex nihilo nihil fit.* This is the argument from "sufficient causes."

2. It is absolutely impossible and inconceivable that there should be an eternal succession of dependent beings without any original independent cause. Succession implies commencement.

3. If existence is not an infinite series, then it must be the effect of an infinite, immutable, independent Being, self-existent and necessarily existing.

4. That which necessarily exists, exists everywhere and always, and is one, because variety or difference of existence is dependent on unity.

5. Reasoning *à posteriori* we may conclude that the self-

[1] For further remarks on Descartes' reasoning, see Rogers' "Collected Essays from the *Edinburgh Review*," vol. iii.; Cousin's "History of Philosophy;" Jules Simon's Essay Introductory to Descartes' Philosophical Works: Paris, 1849; etc.

existent Being is intelligent and free, infinitely wise, powerful and good. In this argument, the ontological and the cosmological are mingled together, and the *à posteriori* is brought in to complete the *à priori*. The first proposition contains all the rest. It is the application of the law of human thought to all existence. Existence is an abstraction from existing objects. What we know is the finite. What we know of the Infinite Being is finite. To reason from the idea of causation, Clarke does, to the existence of God, is metaphysically impossible. An infinite cause is as inconceivable as an infinite series of finite causes, for the conception of cause itself is a relative and finite conception, which loses its definite meaning when it becomes infinite. It is a remarkable fact that the axiom *Ex nihilo nihil fit*, which Clarke employs, is now equally the resort of the materialist in seeking to establish the eternity of matter.

A somewhat similar attempt to formulate the *à priori* argument was made by Moses Lowman in 1735 : "An Argument to prove the unity and perfections of God *à priori*." Admitting, said Lowman, the possibility of positive existence, it must be either necessary or contingent. All existence cannot be contingent, for causation implies that if all existence were contingent, all existence would be impossible, therefore some existence is necessary. Necessary existence is actual existence. The argument, however, in this case is from the necessity of *thought* and therefore is Descartes' appeal to the veracity of consciousness. Dr. Martineau has well observed[1] that it is only as the two processes of reasoning, the metaphysical and the *à posteriori*, are placed side by side, and regarded as both proper to the double nature of man, that they have any weight. "However ready we may be to admit the *à priori* necessity of such ideas as substance and cause, and so far to let them stand on the same list of primary entities with space, as real yet not empirically known, ideal, yet not mental fictions ; still

[1] Philosophical Essays, "Nature and God," vol. i. p. 160.

there is this difference, that they are intrinsically *relative* notions, each of them a member of a pair, and that the other and correlative term—'*attribute*' antithetical to '*substance*,' '*effect*' or '*phenomenon*' to '*cause*'—is simply physical and an indispensable condition of its companion. Under the cloak therefore of stately *metaphysical* axioms, as they march in plenipotentiary array, concealed entrance is given to *material* assumptions; and in the subsequent logical progress, it is just these inductive principles which cunningly slip out and lay the plank across many a chasm that were else impassable. Thus the unsatisfactory results of these bold attempts, their inevitable slip out of their pure Monism, may well confirm our reasonable presumption that Nature cannot be treated as a geometrical or logical necessity." The Intuitional school of Germany, which attempted to build up a system of absolute truth on the foundation of the consciousness, succeeded only in reducing philosophy to an empty formula, and has been well described as "the apotheosis of human impotence."

The effect of the severe logical criticism which Kant brought to bear on the Dogmatic school was to call out a large amount of scepticism. He himself was far from supplying a sound theory of human belief in place of the system which he criticised. The hope of the philosophers was not gone, and if it was true, as Kant had shown, that that which was above the region of experience could not be the direct object of consciousness, then we must seek a philosophy of the real which is above consciousness; in other words, we must regard the subject as containing the object. Fichte said: "The ego and the non-ego are both posited by the ego itself. God is an idea of the ego, a subjective law, a moral order." Schelling went still further. "There is," he said, "an intellectual intuition of the absolute, in which it is emancipated from the conditions of space and time." Hegel, accepting this position, reduced the intellectual intuition of the absolute to a logical idea, the supreme principle of all truth and all reality, in fact, the law of thought. Even in the revised and modified form in which

it has been put forth by the Eclectic school of France, as by M. Cousin, this attempt to vindicate the *à priori* argument from the charge of incompleteness has still failed. It is maintained that in every finite we have an idea of the infinite, as in every infinite we include the finite. There is a primitive intuition on which reason rests, of Nature and self, of the infinite and the finite, of God and man. But the correlative ideas do not certify one another. Thing and nothing are correlatives, but they do not certify one another's reality. The negation implied in infinite, points, not to existence but to non-existence. All we can say is, that man as a spiritual, personal being, is able to rest in the conception of a personal Infinite from whom he has come, when the conception is in any way presented to his mind. It is a contradiction to suppose that his finite reason can certify the existence of the infinite. Ontological arguments for the Being of God are really psychological, that is, not strictly *à priori*, but *à posteriori*, or from the consciousness of man to that which it suggests as the ultimate ground of its affirmations.

II. The next in the order of theistic arguments has been variously named, but is now generally described as the *cosmological*, or the argument from the principle of *causation*. Assuming the reality of the universe, it is argued that, taken as a whole, it is *an effect* which must have proceeded from a *First Cause*. There is some confusion in this terminology. The cosmos is not simply an effect, but it includes the conception of intelligent arrangement and order, therefore the name cosmological ought strictly to include what Kant has denominated the physico-theological argument, or that which finds the proof of an arranging Intelligence in the universe. This, however, is now usually called the teleological argument, as that which reasons from the evidence of final causes to the originating mind and will of the Creator. This will be fully described hereafter. The cosmological argument, or that from cause and effect, is perhaps the most ancient of all attempts to prove, philosophically, the existence of a Supreme Being. From the earliest times of

speculation on the universe, the principle has been recognised as indisputable, *Ex nihilo nihil fit, i.e.*, as Sir William Hamilton has explained it, the human mind cannot conceive an absolute beginning. "Nothing" is a mere negation of thought. Plato and Aristotle differed in their views of what the universe is: Plato regarding it as an emanation from an infinite Intelligence; Aristotle as an effect from a *primum movens*, that is, the manifestation of essential and immutable energy (ἀεὶ κινητὸν ἑαυτὸ κινοῦν). Both agreed that from all eternity there was existence. Aristotle said that existence is *energy;* Plato said that existence is *intellect* (νοῦς), that which contains in itself all the ideas of the universe. *Causality* is the underlying assumption in this reasoning. Leibnitz introduced the term *sufficient reason*, which perhaps better expresses the principle, as cause is a correlative with effect. We must be careful in employing the argument of causation that we do not fall into a pantheistic mode of thought, for if God be the Cause of which the universe is the effect, then the question suggests itself, is He not the universe regarded as a Cause? in other words, is He not the mere name of that tendency of the human mind, derived from its connection with the chain of antecedents and consequents which we call the universe, to ascribe to every fact a preceding fact from which it has come? The chain of causes must hang upon something, it has been reasoned, therefore there must be a First Cause. But Kant has shown that this is only the impotence of the human mind in its attempt to go back in thought, resting at last in the infinite, because it can trace the finite no farther. "You must accept the absolutely necessary as *out of* and *beyond* the world. You cannot *discover* any such necessary existence in the *world*." When we speak of God as the Cause of phenomena, we employ a *regulative* but not a *speculative* principle, *i.e.*, we find the idea useful but we cannot demonstrate it as intellectually necessary. When we argue from the causes and effects which we observe to the principle of causation, and therefore to the necessity of a First Cause, it is of the utmost importance that we examine accu-

rately what is included in our conception of a *cause*. This is a metaphysical subject of great difficulty. We must be content with a brief statement of results. Hume maintained that in the idea of cause and effect there is nothing more involved than phenomenal succession, antecedents and consequents. *Causation* is the *uniformity of succession*. In other words, beyond what experience reveals we know nothing. The school of common sense philosophers replied, *Universality* and *necessity* are constituents of the ideas of causation; they cannot come from *experience*, there is therefore *an ultimate affirmation of the reason*. Sir William Hamilton analyses this ultimate affirmation. It is, he maintains, the "*transformed impotence*" of the human mind. We cannot think anything out of existence, we cannot think anything into existence. Commencement and annihilation are both absolutely inconceivable. But this again has been deemed an unsatisfactory analysis. In all causation there is not only the conception of succession of phenomena, but of *power*. That idea of power arises from the consciousness in man of superiority to the mere succession of phenomena. He can interfere with that succession. He can act freely on Nature. He can originate new combinations of facts, though not new laws by which the combinations work. Our idea of causation is not derived from matter but from spirit, from the causative principle in our consciousness. We connect the idea of *power* or *force* with both matter and mind. It is included in the conception of the ego. We can no more conceive of the universe as self-originated, than of the same universe as proceeding from nothing. The maxim *Ex nihilo nihil fit*, compels us to think of something as eternal. The investigations of science point to change as the condition of phenomena. Are we then to rest in the thought of an eternal succession of finite causes and effects? Or are we to place beyond the succession of finite phenomena an infinite Cause or Reason of all existence, which itself is uncaused? It is admitted that, metaphysically, both these alternatives are equally incomprehensible to the finite intellect. But it does not therefore follow that one may be not

more a resting-place to the reason than the other. It is more accordant with the primary instincts of the mind that that which is finite should have proceeded from the infinite, than that the finite should be eternal, which is to give it an infinite character.

Regarding the universe, then, as given in space and time, there are only three possible theories which can be held as to it: 1. It has originated in the *will and power* of an *infinite Being* whom we are compelled, by the analogy of our own being, to conceive of as a personal, spiritual Being. 2. It is the manifestation of *one eternal principle*, which is neither matter nor mind, though presenting a duality of forms to our consciousness in the phenomena which we are alone able to perceive, a principle which underlies all phenomena, but which as transcendental cannot be known, and therefore cannot be more than an inference of reason. 3. It is the product of *material forces which have eternally existed*, and which, working together, have, in the course of indefinite time and under their own inherent laws, wrought out by chance the effects now perceptible; the mind of man ordering those effects into the cosmos. Now it will be seen that the last of these theories denies the duality of the phenomena, reducing them all to one cause which is called matter, or material forces, and assumes that material force is capable of producing all the effects now in the universe. This is an assumption so distinctly against the evidence both of observation and consciousness that it is utterly untenable. A material force which is capable of such effects is not a material force as we generally understand the term. Nor can we conceive how such force could work by laws, unless there be a precedent power supposed which should prescribe the law. An atom endowed with a law is not conceivable; for there is nothing in our idea of a material atom which will admit of its being a law to itself, or originating its own law. Moreover, a universe of atoms must be ordered into a cosmos by a governing power which must be above the atoms, and therefore non-material.

The materialistic hypothesis is simply a *reductio ad absurdum*, and a violation of the primary laws of human thought. The second theory is a theory of Monism together with Agnosticism; that is, it admits the unity underlying all the phenomena of the universe—admits, too, that it cannot, as being eternal and virtually infinite, be either matter as we know it, or mind as we know it; but is content to describe it as unknowable and inconceivable, while still the logical demand of the mind of man. This plainly is a position which cannot be retained. To the admissions of unity and infinity we must add the dictates of the consciousness, which, though no more than primary suggestions of the reason, form at least a better resting-place for the mind than such mere inaction as agnosticism prescribes. An infinite, eternal One cannot indeed be conceived of as *material*, nor yet strictly as *mental*, but it may be conceived of as *spiritual* and *personal*. We do find that the free action of our personality is in some sense superior to matter; we feel that we are the same identical beings, amid perpetual change. Why may we not place, in thought, above, and beyond the phenomena of the universe, a *personal Creator*, incomprehensible by our intellect, eternally immeasurable by any finite standard, yet of whom, and in whom, and for whom, are all things; who has created the universe that it may be a dim shadow of His own perfection; whose power is Himself; whose action is both in time and in eternity; whose laws are not the commands of an arbitrary will, but the uniform operation of a perfect wisdom and a perfect love?

III. We proceed now to describe another branch of the theistic argument, the *teleological or physico-theological*, or that which is generally intended under the title "the *à posteriori* argument," that which reasons from the evidences of intelligence and wisdom in the universe to an intelligent Creator. This is sometimes called "the argument from Design," although that description of it is inadequate and on some grounds objectionable. The word "*design*" must be em-

ployed somewhat loosely, to be made to cover the extent of meaning concerned in the argument. A more philosophical description of the mode of reasoning employed, by which we are reminded that there is more than one logical principle included in it, is that now commonly adopted, "*the argument from Final Causes;*" the end actually reached being regarded as the reason or cause to which it is to be ascribed, and necessitating, therefore, an *intelligent foresight and purpose*, and the *continual operation of wisdom and power* in the adaptation of successive *intermediate means and ends* to bring about what is held to be the *final cause* or divinely ordained issue.

The following summary of the teleological argument is given by Kant in his "Critique of Pure Reason:" "Transcendental, Dialectic," Book II. chap. iii. § 6 (Meiklejohn's Translation: Bohn): "1. We observe in the world manifest signs of *an arrangement* full of purpose, executed with great wisdom, and existing in a whole, of a *content* indescribably various, and of an *extent* without limits. 2. This arrangement of means and ends is entirely distinct from the things existing in the world in themselves, it belongs to them merely as a contingent attribute; in other words, the *nature* of different things could not of itself, whatever means were employed, harmoniously tend towards certain purposes, were they not chosen and directed for these purposes by a rational and disposing principle, in accordance with certain fundamental ideas. 3. There exists, therefore, a sublime and wise Cause (or several) which is not merely a blind, all-powerful *Nature*, producing the beings and events which fill the world in unconscious fecundity, but a free and intelligent Cause of the world. 4. The unity of this Cause may be inferred from the unity of the reciprocal relation existing between the parts of the world regarded as a constitution (the cosmos), an inference which all our observation favours and all principles of analogy support." That is, the argument may be broken up into these four separate parts, which when taken together form the complete chain of reason-

ing, from the universe, as we behold it with our limited faculties, and the suggestions of our reason concerning it, to the Unity, the one Creator and Ruler, in whom alone our mind finds rest. 1. There are proofs of intelligence in the universe. 2. That intelligence is not to be identified with the universe itself, but must be conceived of as ruling it. 3. Such an intelligence is free and infinite. 4. Our rational observation leads us to conclude that the free, infinite intelligence is one personal Being. Now, before entering upon the fuller description of this argument, it will be well to clear away at the outset any prejudice against it on the ground of logical inconclusiveness. If it be taken to be a scientific demonstration of the Being of God, it will be seen at once to be inadequate, as it reasons from the ideas, which are suggested by the universe to the human mind, to the absolute reality which those ideas represent. It may be objected, and has been objected, this argument only proves that the universe reflects the laws of our thought; but what certainty have we that those laws are absolutely trustworthy? It can only be answered that man can go no further than to affirm that which the laws of his humanity necessitate. And what more ought he to demand? Hume has argued that because the extent of the universe is so great, and therefore beyond our experience, we cannot apply to it the same reasonings which we should boldly apply in the scope of our ordinary life; but science is assuring us every day that the wider the extent of our observation, the more fearlessly may we apply the laws of our reason. We are accustomed to say that ultimate principles are universally true. Absolute truth cannot of course be the possession of a finite mind. But relative truth is the only kind of truth on which all human action is based. If we prove that it is the rational conclusion from the facts of the universe that there is a God, that is a firm basis on which a rational being may build up his responsible faith.

The argument *à posteriori*, from the phenomena of the universe to an intelligent Creator, must necessarily be an appeal to human consciousness. We call it *analogical*, because we infer

by analogy that similar effects have similar causes. And it is also *inductive*, for we reason from the particular to the general on the principles of reasoning which are part of our consciousness, and which we cannot refuse to follow. The *first position* which has to be proved is that there are signs and marks of intelligence in the universe, regarded both as an aggregate of facts and as a whole harmoniously arranged. Now in observing any individual fact or collection of facts, and speaking of them as signs of intelligence, we are of course reasoning from our own rational instincts. We cannot conceive of such facts coming into existence in any other way than as the result of thought, purpose, wise arrangement. There must be a cause for the order of phenomena as well as for the phenomena themselves. It has been well remarked by M. Paul Janet, whose eloquent work on Final Causes [1] we shall freely use in the following outline of the argument, that "the order of phenomena is only grasped by the mind; it is an intelligible relation between the phenomena." "This combination is an effect which must have a cause. That which happens in a constant manner cannot be the effect of a mere accident." It may be said, perhaps, that there is no necessity to go further than to observe the fact of the order, and seek no cause for it; but in refusing to ask what is the explanation of the order we are surely stultifying ourselves as rational beings. At all events, when the Theist suggests an explanation in the action of an intelligent First Cause, those who resist that suggestion are bound to refute it or substitute a better for it. Now, looking at the universe as a mass of facts and as a series of operations, there is evident:—1. A combination or harmony of phenomena. 2. The determination of the past and present in relation to the future; that is, results not only actually brought about but manifestly reached as the *end* or effect of determined causes. The effect being possible only by an incalculable mass of coincidences, that the one result should be attained is reasonably explained by the agreement of that

[1] Translated and published by Clark, Edin., 1878.

result with the preceding combinations, therefore it is rightly called an *end*. 3. There is beyond these features the still wider characteristic of interacting and harmonious principles pervading the universe, and so adjusted to one another that while the forces at work are innumerable and virtually infinite, the result is progress and not destruction ; a whole which continues to be a whole, and is not dissolved into chaos.

The only alternative to the suggestion of intelligence as the explanation of such facts is that of chance. But it is against all experience that when there is no ordering principle, when forces work simply as we say at random, they should produce results such as we behold. "Imagine," says M. Janet, "a blind workman, hidden in a cellar, and destitute of all intelligence, who, merely yielding to the simple need of moving his limbs and his hands, should be found to have forged, without knowing it, a key adapted to the most complicated lock which can possibly be imagined." Such a supposition is absurd because against all experience. It is quite true that there are appearances in Nature which at first sight seem to suggest the absence of presiding and ruling intelligence ; that is, there is apparent disorder. But the disorder is only apparent, not real. A deeper study of the facts reveals the higher order, and shows that the fault was in our eye, and not in the objects we observed. Again, it may be proposed to substitute for intelligence governing the phenomena, immanent principles in the elementary constituents of the universe. The atomic theory, *e.g.*, assumes primary elements which have a nature or immanent force, by virtue of which the effects are produced. But this is simply to relegate the question of the origin of intelligence to the metaphysical sphere of an assumption, which is a great *petitio principii*. We shall consider the atomic theory subsequently. It is not inconsistent with Theism, if limited, as it must be, to the scientific generalisation of observed phenomena, and therefore only regulatively and not speculatively maintained. The position of the Theist, so far as the question of intelligence in the universe is concerned, is well defined by

M. Janet: "If it be agreed to apply the term *principle of concordance* to the principle in virtue of which the human mind requires that we explain not only each phenomenon in particular, but also the order and agreement of phenomena, that principle will assume two forms, and will be divided into two distinct principles. The first will be applicable to the *physical and mechanical order*, and may be called *the principle of mechanical concordance;* the second will be applicable to *the biological order*, and may be called *the principle of teleological concordance*, or principle of final causes. 1. *First Principle:* When a certain coincidence of phenomena is remarked constantly, it does not suffice to attach each phenomenon in particular to its antecedent cause; it is necessary also to give a precise reason for the coincidence itself. In other words, the *agreement* of phenomena supposes a precise cause, with a probability which is in proportion to the number and the diversity of the concordant phenomena. 2. *Second Principle:* When a certain coincidence of phenomena is determined, not only by its relation to the past, but also by its relation to the future, we shall not have done justice to the principle of causality if, in supposing a cause for this coincidence, we neglect to explain, besides, its precise relation to the future phenomenon. In other words, the agreement of several phenomena bound together with a future determinate phenomenon, supposes a cause in which that future phenomenon is ideally represented, and the probability of this presumption increases with the complexity of the concordant phenomena and the number of the relations which unite them to the final phenomenon."[1] It would be impossible within the limits of this work to refer at any length to illustrative facts. Of the principle of mechanical concordance the whole of physical science is an illustration, one of the main features of which in modern times is the attempt to co-ordinate the material forces and formulate their correlation. The Nebular theory of La Place presupposes principles of agreement, order, symmetry, and plan. "The

[1] Pp. 54–5.

form of the world is explained as a result of a division or dismemberment of a homogeneous whole. It is, the dismemberment or division of the nebula which has given birth to the different stars, at present separated, which are only in reality its debris. The primitive nebula was, then, already the actual world, potentially ; it was the confined germ which by the internal labour of the elements was to become a system. But let it be well observed, the nebula is not a chaos ; it is a definite form, whence there is to issue later, in virtue of the laws of motion, an ordered world." When we pass from the realm of mere mechanical effects to the region of biology, we are in the presence of innumerable facts which point not to mere mechanical concordance, but to the adjustment of means to ends, and the perpetual anticipation of results in determinate combinations of causes. There are two classes of facts in which the illustrations of teleological principles in Nature are most clearly seen—those which relate to *organic functions*, and those which relate to *animal instincts*. Of the former, the following may be enumerated as supplying the Theist with abundant proofs of intelligent arrangement :—

The structure and functional action of the eye. This is one of the most familiar illustrations, which may be found in every book of Natural Theology. Mr. John Stuart Mill has analysed the process of inductive reasoning in the case of the eye as follows : "The parts of which the eye is composed, and the allocations which constitute the arrangement of those parts, resemble one another in this very remarkable property, that they all conduce to enabling the animal to see. These things being as they are, the animal sees ; if any one of them were different from what it is, the animal, for the most part, would either not see, or would not see equally well. Now the particular combination of organic elements called an eye, had, in every instance, a beginning in time, and must therefore have been brought together by a cause or causes. The number of instances is immeasurably greater than is, by the principles of inductive logic, required for the exclusion of a random con-

currence of independent causes, or, speaking technically, for the elimination of chance. We are therefore warranted by the canons of induction in concluding, that what brought all these elements together was some cause common to them all; and inasmuch as the elements agree in the single circumstance of conspiring to produce sight, there must be some connection by way of causation between the cause which brought these elements together, and the fact of sight." If chance then be eliminated, what other kind of cause can be supposed than one which we may fairly conclude is analogous with intelligence.

The organ of hearing presents similar evidence. The following remarks of the great naturalist Müller, will be read with interest: "With the animals which *live in the air*, the sound waves reach first the solid parts of the animal and the auditory organ, and thence they pass to the lymph of the labyrinth. The power of hearing of an animal which lives and hears in the air ought, therefore, to depend on the degree in which the solid parts of its auditory organ are fitted to receive aerial waves, on the diminution which the movements of vibrating molecules experience at the moment when the vibrations pass from the air into the external parts of the auditory organ, and on the degree of fitness of the labyrinthian lymph to receive vibrations from the external parts of the auditory organ. *The whole external part of the organ of hearing is calculated with a view to render easier the vibrations of the air on solid parts, a transmission which in itself presents difficulties.* With the animals that *live and hear in the water* the problem is quite different. The medium which transmits the vibrations of sound is the water; it brings them to the solid parts of the animal's body, whence they come once again into water, into the lymph of the labyrinth. Here the acuteness of hearing depends on the degree of aptitude possessed by the solid parts of the auditory organ, which the waves of sound require, in the first place, to traverse, to receive waves from the ambient water, in order to transmit them anew to the water, and on the diminution which the vibrating molecules undergo during this passage. *We*

shall perceive here again that the whole external part of the auditory organ is calculated to the end of facilitating this transmission."[1]

The same kind of evidence may be induced from the observation of the adaptation of *the teeth* to the habits of the animal; of the *epiglottis*, or the door opening and shutting on the *trachea;* of *the valves of the veins*, and of the chyle-bearing vessels, the sight of which led Harvey to the discovery of the circulation of the blood. *The structure of the heart*, with its wonderful subdivisions and contractile power, producing the double motion of systole and diastole, is an impressive illustration. "To explain without a final cause a mechanism so complicated, and at the same time so simple,—simple in principle, complicated by the number of parts in operation,—one must suppose that a physical cause, acting according to given laws, has hit upon, without having sought, the system of all others the fittest to permit the circulation of the blood, while other causes, equally blind, determine the production of the blood and make it flow, in virtue of other laws, in channels so well placed; and then that this blood, flowing in these channels, was again found, from other circumstances, and by an unforeseen coincidence, useful and indispensable for the preservation of the living being. How is it conceivable that so many diverse causes, acting without an end, should coincide so well in this common action with that end?"[2] The same may be said of *the respiratory apparatus*, of *the organs of motion*, of the *vocal organs in man.* With respect to the last Müller observes: "In studying the voice of man one is struck with the infinite art with which the organ that produces it is constructed. No instrument of music is quite comparable to this, for organs and pianos, despite all their resources, are imperfect in other respects. Some of these instruments, like mouth-pipes, do not permit us to pass from *piano* to *forte;* in others, as in all those which are played by percussion, there are no means of maintaining

[1] Vol. ii. p. 404, French Translation.
[2] Janet, p. 71.

the sound. The organ has two registers, that of the mouth-pipes and that of the reed-pipes, in this point of view resembling the human voice, with its chest register and falsetto. But none of these instruments combines all advantages like the human voice.. The vocal organ has, above them all, the advantage of being able to give all the sounds of the musical scale and all their shades, with a single mouth-pipe, while the most perfect of reed instruments requires a separate pipe for each sound."[1] There are many other illustrations to be drawn from the animal organism; and beyond all particular proofs there is the fact of an *organic existence* itself, the *harmony* and *correlation* necessitated, and the *mysterious life* which is maintained and propagated. If such facts cannot be rationally attributed to chance, they must be the result of an ordering intelligence.

Another department of proofs is the very wide one of *animal instincts.* These may be divided into three classes: 1. *Instincts which are adapted to preserve the individual.* Such are those which concern the selection of appropriate *food;* those which, in the case of carnivorous animals, secure the capture of prey, those which accumulate food for future use, those which construct habitations, those which provide clothing and shelter; of all of which cases in illustration are readily at hand in works on natural history. 2. *Instincts relating to the preservation of species:* the laying of eggs, the construction of nests, the preparation of structures connected with animal life. Birds make pleasure gardens for themselves of the most complicated and beautiful character. 3. *Instincts of society.* Companies of hyenas and wolves collect to hunt and then separate. Migrating animals (swallows, pigeons, locusts, herrings) unite for the journey and separate at the end of it; beavers, wasps, bees, ants, all have more or less of this social instinct. The instinct finds its means of operation, and cannot be attributed to chance.

And now, having referred to some of the illustrative facts

[1] Müller, Tom. II. lib. III. § 4 ch. ii. p. 197.

which indicate the working of intelligence, the next step in the argument is to show that we are employing a fair and rational analogy when we infer that all such adaptations of means to ends, like those of which we are conscious ourselves in the sphere of human industry and art, are the result of a foreseeing and contriving intelligence, or, to use Kant's language, this adaptation is distinct from the things themselves, it is only a contingent attribute of the things, and implies an external and disposing principle at work. It is admitted that we reason from man to Nature, are we right in doing so? The following considerations must be here adduced as in point. 1. *Man himself and his industry and arts are in the realm of Nature, and part of Nature.* We may therefore rightly reason, that what is true of him and his agency is true of Nature, looking, that is, only to general laws. 2. *We employ the same analogy in reasoning from ourselves to our fellow-men.* We attribute intelligence and design to them, although we are able to do so only by analogy with our own conscious acts. "We see only their acts and the external manifestations of their feelings and thoughts. In calling certain of these actions by the names of *industry* and *arts*, we mean that these actions are collected co-ordinations towards an end; that is to say, phenomena determined by the idea of the future and in which the consequent is the determining reason of the antecedent. But this is only a supposition; for not having any direct experience of the efficient cause of these phenomena, we cannot absolutely affirm that that cause has proposed to itself the end which it seems to pursue, nor even that it has proposed any end. There is at least one case in which the final cause is established by experience, namely, the case of our personal and voluntary activity. From this centre we can radiate around ourselves; and the first certain step which we take beyond ourselves is to affirm intelligence, causality, desire, and, finally, finality in our fellows."[1] 3. *When we observe the same kind of facts in the lower animals, we attribute them in the*

[1] Janet, pp. 89–91.

same manner to finality; to instincts, or to functional operations, which we must regard as intelligently ordered, not by the individual animal, but by the laws of its being prescribed by an intelligence outside of it and pervading Nature. 4. *The analogy, therefore, from the industry of man to the industry of Nature is founded on an actual resemblance, the same effects being explained by the same causes.* "Experience shows us in a certain and precise case (viz., ourself) the existence of a real cause, namely, the final cause; in all similar and analogous cases we infer the same cause, at least so far as the differences noticed between the facts do not warrant us to call in question the existence of such a cause." There must be a finality at the origin of things; if it is not merely instinctive and unconscious, which we cannot conceive it to be, it must be analogous to our own, *conscious and intelligent.* But it must be remembered final causes do not exclude physical causes; on the other hand, they require them and imply them. And physical causes do not exclude final causes, but appeal to them. Muscular contractility explains the contraction of the heart, but this general property, common to all muscles, does not suffice to explain how or why the heart contracts in one way rather than another, why it has taken such a form and not such another. "The precise question is, how it happens that Nature, employing a contractile tissue, has given it the *suitable* structure and arrangement, and how it rendered it fit for the special and capital function of the circulation. The elementary properties of the tissues are the necessary conditions of which Nature makes use to solve the problem, but they in no way explain how it has succeeded in solving it." Life is more than mechanism, it is finality.

So far, then, we are standing on firm ground when we allege that if we can speak of intelligence and design in ourselves, we can do so of the same kind of causes in Nature. But before we pass on to the concluding step of the teleological argument for the existence of God,—*i.e,* the unity and personality of the intelligence which reveals itself in Nature,—we

must examine some of the positions taken up by those who, while admitting that the phenomena are those of intelligence, deny that we are justified in concluding that that intelligence is analogous with our own. These positions may be thus classified :—1. That of the Evolutionist; 2. That of the Materialist; 3. That of the Pantheist; 4. That of the Agnostic or Positivist. These positions are not exclusive of each other. The evolutionist may be a materialist, or a pantheist, or an agnostic. The pantheist may be a materialist or a non-materialist, or an agnostic. The agnostic denies that he is either a materialist, or a pantheist, or a Theist, and yet that he holds a tenable position. But each of these designations points to a theory which professes to dispense with Theism. Therefore we must put them aside before we proceed to the distinctly theistic affirmation.

1. *The position of the Evolutionist.* At the foundation of the theory of evolution there lie two principles: first, that all the phenomena of Nature are the result of a *process of development and not of special creations*; and secondly, that in the universe as a whole there is a totality of force which simply acts and reacts with unceasing energy, and according to uniform and unchangeable laws, producing the constant integration and dissolution which carry on the history of Nature. It is upon these two foundation stones that evolution rests. The first appearance of a formulated doctrine of evolution was in animal physiology, where it was proposed to account for the origin of species, and owed its chief support to the marvellous observations and fascinating generalisations of Darwin. But it has been carried into other regions of science, and is now applied to geology, astronomy, zoology, history, politics and social statics. The principle of development will be variously employed in these different spheres of observation, and it may be separated from all attempts to account for the origin of things. No one denies that there is development in Nature, and it may be an open question whether all the present existing forms of organic and inorganic Nature have been gradually

educed from primary elements without the introduction of new powers or not. "The genesis of an atom," says Mr. Herbert Spencer, "is no easier to conceive than that of a planet. Indeed, far from rendering the universe less mysterious than before, evolution makes a much greater mystery of it. Creation by fabrication is much lower than creation by evolution."[1] But undoubtedly the theory which has been put forth by the evolutionists is intended to be a substitute for that of a presiding and creative intelligence. Certain laws are said to account for the results reached in Nature, and the origin of Nature as a primary force or collection of forces is left in the abyss of the unknown and unknowable. These evolutionary laws are such as the following:—1. By the mere action of the law of *differentiation* phenomena tend to multiply indefinitely. 2. In that indefinite multiplication of phenomena there is a principle of *integration* at work;—there are *resemblances* which produce combinations; there are *successions* of similar phemonena, as in the case of heredity; there are *selections* the result of the attractions of affinity and coincidence. 3. The definite forms being integrated in Nature, *reproduce themselves* by the same laws which led to their appearance. The essential point in Mr. Darwin's theory is what he calls *natural selection*, that is, he supposes that the varieties are produced in Nature by a principle which may be regarded as analogous to *selection*, —that the coincidence of circumstances and blind impulses produces the same results *without design*, that man produces *with design*; but plainly it is a mere *petitio principii* to deny that natural selection is intelligent where artificial selection is and must be. To enumerate such laws as heredity, variability, over-production, natural selection, sexual selection, is simply to enumerate facts or to describe the procedure of Nature, but it is not to go behind the facts and give the cause or causes. All such terms as differentiation, integration, segregation, selection, survival of the fittest, and others like them, are merely phenomenal in their reference. They really explain nothing.

[1] "Essays," vol. i. p. 298.

They merely describe the facts. If evolution assumes to be more than a description of the process of Nature, then it becomes a contradiction, for it ascribes to a process what is outside and beyond the process. Evolution is a history. But natural *history* must become metaphysical, must pass beyond the phenomena described, before it can say what is the genesis of the universe as a whole. Evolution, if not a mere theory of the gradation of existence, in which it is not opposed to Theism, is "the doctrine of chance under a more learned name," as M. Janet has observed. "It expresses the successive gropings of Nature until favourable circumstances brought about such a throw of the dice as is called an *organization* made to live." "The error of scientists is in believing that they have eliminated final causes from Nature when they have shown how certain effects result from certain given causes; the discovery of the efficient causes appears to them a decisive argument against the final causes." Second causes are not opposed to final causes, and the more elaborate the sphere of second causes is shown to be, the greater the first cause which they presuppose. We pass, then, from the position of the evolutionist, which cannot be made antagonistic to Theism without becoming unscientific and dogmatic, and consider—

2. *The position of the Materialist.* Materialists may be described as of two kinds, philosophical and scientific. The philosophical materialist denies the existence of spirit on the ground that all our knowledge is derived from sensation, and in sensation he assumes that a unity alone is given in consciousness, which we can only define in terms of matter. The other position is closely connected with the atomic theory, which is not indeed necessarily materialistic, but which is used by the materialist to help out his difficulty in explaining the origin of phenomena. We need scarcely examine at any length the materialism which professes to be philosophical. It plainly proceeds upon a contradiction, for it appeals to consciousness, and yet virtually denies that consciousness is possible. If there be nothing but matter in existence, then we must attribute

consciousness to matter, which is simply to connote in the term matter the attributes which are not commonly connoted in it; in other words to confuse language. In consciousness there is duality. To mingle the two orders of facts, the material and the mental, is to resist the evidence of consciousness. But the scientific school of materialists occupy a somewhat different position. They do not profess to eliminate spirit from the universe, but merely to explain the phenomena of matter by a theory as to its nature. It may be regarded as scientifically proved that there are certain elements into which matter, as it comes under our senses, is divisible. These elements, which by their combinations form the bodies with which we have to do in Nature, are divisible into molecules or smallest particles. But these molecules of primary elements must be supposed to be themselves made up of other elements which are denominated *atoms*, which are invisible and imperceptible, and which must be regarded as indivisible and ultimate. These primary atoms are a metaphysical basis on which to rest the molecular theory of matter. We have nothing to say against that theory as a scientific account of the mechanical and chemical changes observed in phenomena, but the moment that the scientist passes beyond his own province and assumes that which his science cannot prove, he lays himself open to the attack of the metaphysician and philosopher, he is, in fact, passing from physics to ontology. Whence the atoms? Must they not be endowed with qualities and forces in order to constitute the universe? Can we conceive them as endowing themselves, or is it metaphysically conceivable that an indefinite number of atoms existed from all eternity? The atomist takes for granted motion among the atoms, for if they be without motion, then there is but one eternal atom, which is substantially the theistic position. There must be empty space between the atoms to account for motion. How then, supposing the atom to be endowed with force (which force cannot be accounted for), does the atom communicate force to another atom through a space absolutely empty? If there be no empty space between the atoms, there is no motion

possible, and therefore no communication of force, no change. Again, if we try to think of the atoms as material, that is, as extended, for unextended matter is a contradiction, then we must conceive of them as divisible, and if they are divisible then they are not ultimate atoms. Again, atoms conditionate one another. A is the condition of the existence of B, B of C, and so forth. If, then, condition is the law under which they exist, they imply an *unconditioned*, on which that existence must rest. An infinite number of ultimate atoms is an absurd hypothesis. The mind is necessarily carried forward to unity. Logically we must go on to *One Ultimate Atom*, *One Ultimate Force*, one eternal basis of existence which cannot be matter, but must be greater than matter, which must be intelligence. The defect in all such hypotheses is that they fail to go beyond the facts, and therefore explain nothing. To generalise, to analyse, to refer facts to laws, is not to solve mysteries, it is simply to cover them over with a cloud of scientific language which conceals ignorance with a pretence of knowledge. It has been well observed that "if the results as we now see them present evidence of power directed by wisdom, skill subserving purpose, and purpose, skill, wisdom, power, ministering to benevolence; then the validity of this proof is in nowise weakened, but the wonder of it is enormously augmented if we have reason to believe that these results were already secured in that state of things to which our globe would revert if, dashing against some sister globe, it were molten and vaporized by the heat of its arrested motion, and every atom were to flee from the company of its fellow atoms on wings of fire into immeasurable space."[1] The position of the evolutionist and that of the materialist are both untenable in the light of reason.

3. Is it better with *the position of the Pantheist?* As the name implies, the pantheist has a conception in his theory which takes the place of the Theist's conception of a personal God. He distinguishes himself from the atheist, who simply

[1] Conder: "Basis of Faith," p. 257.

denies the existence of a personal intelligence at the centre of the universe, by substituting for that denial a conception of the universe in its relation to human thought. Taking *Nature* to mean, in the words of Mr. John Stuart Mill, "all the powers existing in either the outer or the inner world, and everything which takes place by means of these powers," it is evident that Nature can be regarded as an effect or as a cause; that is, we may look at either side of an eternal succession of pairs of facts connected together, antecedents and consequents, and as we look at the one side of the series and call them the series of antecedents, or causes, we think of Nature as causative (*natura naturans*), and as we look at the other side of the series and call them the series of consequents or effects, we think of Nature as an effect (*natura naturata*). Now the pantheist rests at that point. The Cosmos, the Pan (τὸ πᾶν), is the only eternal cause of itself we can ever discover. The powers which are manifested are immanent. To man's eye they present the phenomena of intelligence, but the intelligence is cosmical not personal. This position is no advance upon atheism. It is a substitution of a certain formula of the universe for the universe. Either therefore the pantheist must maintain that what is called Intelligence and Final Cause in the universe is *a reflection of man's own intelligence, and no more*, in which case he is simply relegating the question of Theism, and his position is untenable on the ground of its inadequacy; or else, denying the existence of intelligence altogether, and looking upon the appearances as deceptions, his position coincides with that of the materialist or atheist: the cosmos is without the living action of intelligence; it is a mere collection of forces and laws. But in neither case is it possible for a pantheist to escape the objection that he is ignoring the phenomena themselves. There among the facts is the phenomenon of adaptation of means to ends, working out of results, achievement of good, maintenance of order. To say, that is only as I understand it, does not get rid of the fact. We are compelled to think of a cause adequate to explain such results, and we can-

not conceive it as non-intelligent; otherwise we should put in the effect more than we do in the cause. To deny that the intelligence is personal intelligence is certainly a possible position, but if it be not personal, what is it? To call it impersonal is to say nothing. To make it an immanent intelligence residing in the universe *as a whole*, is to substitute for the conception of personal intelligence, which must be a possible conception to man, one that is in the first place a *logical contradiction*, and in the second place altogether *beyond the testimony of human consciousness;* therefore an impossible conception. A collection of powers and forces and laws which is intelligent, is only conceivable under the unity of a personal Being. We are not now concerned with pantheism itself, which has many forms, but with its position as accounting for the phenomena of intelligence in the universe. In the case of what is called *idealistic pantheism*, in which, as we see exemplified in Hegel, the great German philosopher, God is regarded as infinite personality coming to self-consciousness in Nature, it is possible that a mystical language may be employed, which admits of the term intelligence being applied to the universe. But the pantheist, by identifying the universe and God, confuses the distinctions of thought, and therefore as against the Theist has no intelligible theory to propose accounting for the phenomena.

4. There remains, then, only another position to be examined. It is that of the *Agnostic* or *Positivist.* This may be described as a position which, in relation to Theism, is threefold: (1) Dogmatic Denial; (2) Sceptical Indifference; (3) Philosophical Negation. The agnostic or positivist, assuming the position, that the test of all knowledge is verification by scientific evidence, that is, reference of phenomena to ascertained laws, may deny that there is any proof of the existence of an intelligent Cause of the universe. He becomes then a *dogmatist*, and as such we may safely leave him to be dealt with by those of his own school who, like Mr. Herbert Spencer, Mr. Arnold, and others, admit that there is evidence of Power beyond the phenomena, inscrutable and unknowable, but still the necessary

inference of reason. In like manner, as a *sceptic*, the agnostic, by refusing to accept the proofs of Theism as sufficient, is not denying that the theistic position can be maintained, but merely affirms that he awaits more satisfactory arguments. But the third, and the only consistent form of the theory, is that which neither denies the doctrine of Theism nor criticises its proofs, but contents itself with affirming that so far as scientific knowledge is concerned phenomena and their laws form the limits of inquiry. The following remarks of Mr. J. S. Mill, in speaking of Auguste Comte and his system, will serve to place this position of simple negation clearly before the reader, and will show that it is a just limitation of scientific method, but not a vindication of the atheistic or even of the sceptical position. "The positive mode of thinking is not necessarily a negation of the supernatural; it merely throws back that question to the origin of all things. If the universe had a beginning, that beginning, by the very conditions of the case, was supernatural; the laws of Nature cannot account for their own origin. The French philosopher is free to form his opinion on this subject conformably to the weight he attaches to the said marks of design. The positive philosophy maintains, that within the limits of the existing order of the universe, or rather, of the part which is known to us, the cause directly determinative of each phenomenon is natural, not supernatural. It is compatible with this principle to believe that the universe was created, and even that it is continually governed by an intelligence, provided we admit that the intelligent Governor adheres to fixed laws, which are only modified or counteracted by other laws of like operation, and which are never superseded in a capricious or providential manner. Whoever regards all events as parts of a constant order, each of these events being the invariable consequent of some antecedent condition, or combination of conditions, fully accepts the positive mode of thinking, whether or not he recognise a universal antecedent whereof the whole system of Nature was originally the consequent, and whether that universal antecedent be conceived as an intelligence or

not."[1] Now, without criticising this position, which affirms, what it is impossible to prove, the absolute and eternal uniformity of Nature and the fixity of law, we may accept it as the position of the scientific school, and it brings us merely to this point, that on the principle of the invariability of law, and the eternal succession of antecedents and consequents, it is impossible to prove the existence of an intelligence as the First Cause of all phenomena. But we are certainly able to refer back the principle of the universality of law, which is the positive principle *par excellence*, to the higher reason, and ask, Is it conceivable that such universality of law, such infinite relations, and infinite adjustments, and infinite regularity in the universe, are the result of chance?—in other words, have no efficient cause at all? Must we not go back in thought to some form of active intelligence as alone sufficient to account for all the appearances of intelligence in the phenomena? "The consciousness of an inscrutable Power," says Mr. Herbert Spencer,[2] "manifested to us through all phenomena, has been growing ever clearer, and must eventually be freed from its imperfections. The certainty that on the one hand such a Power exists, while on the other hand its nature transcends intuition and is beyond imagination, is the certainty towards which intelligence has from the first been progressing. To this conclusion science inevitably arrives as it reaches its confines; while to this conclusion religion is irresistibly driven by criticism." Now, that religion must submit to the criticism here referred to may be true; but plainly, if science acknowledges itself equally incapable of knowing what transcends phenomena, science cannot take upon itself the office of critic, unless, indeed, religion offers its affirmations to the scientific tests to be verified.

We are now, therefore, prepared to pass beyond the barriers erected by denial or doubt. We advance to the last step of the teleological argument, which we repeat in the words of the great German philosopher;—

[1] Mill's "Auguste Comte and Positivism," pp. 13–15.
[2] "First Principles," Part I. ch. v.

"There exists, therefore, a sublime and wise Cause which is not merely a blind, all-powerful Nature, producing the beings and events which fill the world in unconscious fecundity, but a free and intelligent Cause whose unity may be inferred from the unity of the reciprocal relation existing between the parts of the world regarded as a construction—an inference which all our observation favours and all principles of analogy support." This conclusion of the argument results from the impossibility to our reason of conceiving any other kind of cause for the phenomena. If it be not chance,—if it be not a mere immanent finality; that is, if Nature is not a sufficient account of itself; in other words, if we are compelled to ascribe intelligence to a Being and not to the universe as a mere collection of powers, then there is no escaping the conclusion, the finality is intentional; it is the finality of will; the theistic position is proved. To our minds, the power to contrive and to design, that is to say, the power to act so as to reveal law and purpose and originate development, must be personal. We cannot conceive it otherwise. It must be centred in unity. We must speak of that which appeals to our faculties in terms of our faculties. We can conceive nothing higher than personality. We need seek for nothing higher. The conception of an infinite Personality creating and sustaining the universe is doubtless one that is only imperfectly before the mind, but it is the only one in which it can rest. "The great energies of Nature," says Dr. Paley,[1] "are known to us only by their effects. The substances which produce them are as much concealed from our senses as the Divine essence itself. *Gravitation*, though constantly present, though constantly exerting its influence, though everywhere around us, near us, and within us, though diffused throughout all space, and penetrating the texture of all bodies with which we are acquainted, depends, if upon a fluid, upon a fluid which, though both powerful and universal in its operation, is no object of sense to us; if upon any other kind of substance or action, upon a substance and

[1] "Natural Theology," ch. xxiii.

action from which we receive no distinguishable impressions. Is it, then, to be wondered at that it should in some measure be the same with the Divine nature?" As to all attempts on the part of man to represent in thought the great First Cause of all things, they must, of course be symbolical and inadequate; but they are not necessarily untrue because they are imperfect, nor are they irrational because when criticised by the reason they involve logical contradictions, for that is the condition of all our knowledge. "We keenly feel," says M. Paul Janet, "the limits of our reason to make our own conceptions the measure of the Absolute Being; but we have too much confidence in His veracity and goodness not to believe that human conceptions have a legitimate and necessary relation to things as they are in themselves. If we have been able suitably to use our reason, if we have obeyed as strictly as possible the severe rules of the philosophic method, we are entitled to believe that the highest hypothesis that the human mind can form regarding the Supreme Cause of the universe would not be contradicted, but rather would be confirmed and cleared of its obscurities, if it were given us, as the theologians say, to see God face to face by a direct and immediate vision. Such an hypothesis may well be but an approximation to the truth, and a human representation of the Divine nature; but although inadequate to its object, it does not follow that it is unfaithful to it. It is its projection into a finite consciousness, its translation into the language of men, which is all that philosophy can demand."[1]

Before leaving the teleological argument, it may be well to refer briefly to a few specific objections which have been brought against it, particularly under its common description of argument from design.

1. *Hume* has denied that the analogy is fairly drawn from the works of human art to the creation of the universe. His objection is found in the "Dialogues on Natural Religion."[2]

[1] "Final Causes," p. 442.
[2] "Works:" Edin., 1826, vol. ii. p. 449.

"When two species of objects have always been observed to be conjoined together, I can infer, by custom, the existence of one whenever I see the existence of the other, and this I call an argument from experience. But how this argument can have place when the objects, as in the present case, are single, individual, without parallel or specific resemblance, may be difficult to explain. And will any one tell me with a serious countenance that an orderly universe must arise from some thought and art, like the human, because we have experience of it? To ascertain this reasoning, it were requisite that we had experience of the origin of worlds, and it is not sufficient surely that we have seen ships and cities arise from human art and contrivance." Hume's objection here only avails against an attempt to explain the method of the Divine procedure, not against the general principle that that which reveals intelligence may be fairly taken as having intelligence in its cause. Paley's celebrated illustration of a watch accidentally picked up suggesting a watchmaker would not be valid if it were taken to mean that every work in Nature has been made after the same method as the piece of human mechanism; but it is perfectly valid as showing that in referring an effect to its cause we naturally and inevitably refer intelligence in the effect to intelligence in the cause.

2. *Spinoza* makes an objection to the argument, that it destroys the perfection of God by representing Him as seeking an end, and therefore lacking what He seeks. "Although theologians and metaphysicians distinguish between an end of *indigence* and an end of *assimilation*, they yet avow that God has made all for Himself, not for the things He was to create, seeing that it was impossible to allege, before creation, any other end for the action of God than God Himself; and in this way they are forced to admit that all the objects which God has set before Himself by arranging certain means to attain them God has at some time lacked, and has desired to possess them,—a necessary consequence of their principles." But the difficulty, if real, applies to any conception of creation

at all, whether Spinoza's pantheistic one or any other. We do not regard creation as supplying a want in the Divine nature, but simply as expressing that nature. The mystery, if any, must be in that nature itself, which is unfathomable.

3. *Naturalists and Positivists* object that we cannot explain the facts of Nature if we attribute them to a perfect intelligence, because there are so many anomalies and imperfections, and, as it were, gropings of Nature which seem to be unworthy of a Divine Author. This, however, is no objection to the principle of the argument. Our knowledge and science are imperfect. What seems at first imperfection proves to be infinitely wise on further examination. Harmonies are not destroyed by discords, if the discords are resolved. The cases of useless organs, rudimentary organs, apparent and hurtful adaptations, may be all ultimately explained by naturalists themselves. "Those who maintain that there are final causes in Nature are not therefore bound to maintain that there are only such, and that they must always and everywhere prevail over efficient causes." "He who admits at once final and efficient causes has more opportunity to explain matters than he who only admits efficient but not final causes." [1]

4. *The sceptical school* generally, object that the argument goes no further than probability, though it is admitted that the probability is great. "It must be allowed," says Mr. J. S. Mill, "that in the present state of our knowledge, the adaptations in Nature afford a large balance of probability in favour of creation by intelligence. It is equally certain that there is no more than a probability." But to this it may be replied that "a large amount of probability" is sufficient to make a basis of responsibility. Demonstration is not claimed for the teleological argument. Those who refuse assent when probability is reached are morally bound to vindicate their unbelief by an intelligible theory in explanation of the facts. The scientist may say "not proven" to the doctrine of Theism; but, as a moral being, he cannot hold aloof from facts which press upon

[1] Janet.

him the probability that he is the creature of God, and that as such he has duties to the Supreme Being which he cannot disclaim except by abnegating his moral nature. "Unless," says Dr. Martineau,[1] "we are to throw away all idea of homogeneity and proportion between cause and effect, and between instinctive tendency and its fulfilment, the rational and the moral in us can neither have their beginning nor reach their end in the absence of Divine reason and Divine right. If our human experience teaches us anything certain, it is this: that it is thought which kindles thought, and love which elicits love, and character which moulds and refines character; and that, not *upwards*, the inferior prevailing to better the superior, but *downwards*, the greater lifting the less. To reverse this order, to educe mind from what is not yet mind, and conscience from blind and neutral force, is to put more into the effect than the cause provides, and, *ipso facto*, to convict the explanation of incompetency. And similarly, when we face round to see whither our nature looks instead of whence it comes, we find not an appetency, affection, or energy of our being that fails to meet its fitting *object;* through the range of the animal, the domestic, the social life, the several relations, of which one term is within us, complete themselves by hitting upon the other in the external scene. The scientific intellect slakes its thirst on the order and beauty of the world; and even when it ventures, in sympathy with the *style* of Nature, on guesses and forecasts too daring for immediate belief, its vaticinations have often struck the truth. Is, then, this analogy to be first broken when we reach the highest levels of our humanity? Are we *there* fleeing out of all relations, though still furnished with their inward drift and cry?—still sent to seek, with prejudgment that we shall not find? If we are to assume any unanimity in our nature, or any harmony of it with its theatre of being, such disappointment of its ends carries in it an improbability revolting to the reason." To resist the evidence of an argument so full of probability, and so harmonious with the tendencies of

[1] "Ideal Substitutes for God," p. 29.

thought, is to go beyond the doubt of the sincere inquirer after truth, it is to dogmatise in the spirit of atheistic unbelief; and the *science* which is supposed to give such resistance intellectual support is a "*science falsely so called*," not the true ἐπιστήμη, the true γνῶσις, but the "*darkening of counsel with words without knowledge*."

CHAPTER II.

THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL OR MORAL ARGUMENT.

IT is not possible to carry out any one line of argument for the existence of God without at some point crossing one or other of the other lines. This is exemplified in the case of the *à priori* reasonings, to which reference has been made, which become at last an appeal to the testimony of consciousness. In like manner, the teleological argument involves necessarily the evidence which is derived from common sense and general agreement among mankind and the laws of thought, and is founded upon the principle of causality, which itself rests for its certainty on the testimony of consciousness. When we distinguish a branch of argument therefore as *anthropological,* we are not meaning to represent it as comprehending all the arguments which are derived from human consciousness, but simply as classifying under one head those which reason from the constitution of human nature, and the facts of human history, to the existence of a personal God. As the main feature of this branch of the argument is the appeal from the moral consciousness to the moral Ruler, it is often designated *the moral argument.* This we will now place before the reader in its leading particulars. We may divide *the anthropological argument* into four main branches.

I. *The Psychological,* or that from the personal consciousness —the soul.

II. *The Ethical,* or that from the moral nature and the moral world.

III. *The Historical,* from the consent of mankind as historically testified.

IV. *The Providential*, in the evidences of a Divine government, wise, benevolent, and perfect.

I. *The Psychological argument.* We have already referred to those pyschological reasonings which would find in the ideas of the mind a proof of objective existence. All attempts such as those of Descartes, and those of the transcendental philosophers generally, to give reality to consciousness, on the metaphysical principle that existence is the same as thinking, must be eminently unsatisfactory, and are now acknowledged to be so. Because we *think* of God as existing, we do not prove more than the fact itself that there is the *thought in man;* and whatever the value of that fact, it is inductive only, and can only be summoned as a witness to what consciousness is, not to what lies beyond consciousness. But putting aside the *à priori*, intuitional, or transcendental, form of the argument, there is an appeal which may reasonably be made to what man thinks about himself as vindicating the rational worth of what he thinks about God. It will scarcely be disputed that there is in consciousness the thought of self as a free personality. It is unnecessary to criticise metaphysically the conception of personality. A definition of it cannot be demanded so long as it is admitted to represent a universal conviction. Like many of our primary ideas we fail to make a complete analysis of it for lack of some elements which seem to be hidden from us in the profound mystery of being. Some have indeed maintained that personality is an idea formulated from the consciousness of will: man is able to originate action; he is in some sense a free force; he is self-conscious. Will and self-consciousness are said to make up personality. This analysis, however, is defective. Will itself is subject to motive. Absolute freedom is not predicable of man. The want of it does not interfere with the consciousness of personality. I feel that my will is not myself. My reason is not myself. But in some mysterious way both volition and reason are attributes of the self. And when I speak of self-consciousness I employ a term which cannot

be analysed, for the self and the not-self are both in consciousness in a manner which cannot be explained. The ultimate fact of self-consciousness is an unfathomable mystery. But while putting aside the metaphysical solution of the fact, we cannot refuse to admit that there is in man the sense of personality. He knows himself subject to laws, and still he is conscious that he is a free being. He is matter and mind, but he is not a mere succession of the phenomena of matter and mind. There is a unity in him in the midst of the multiplicity, and permanence notwithstanding the endless changes. This even the positivist admits, as Mr. Mill does when he speaks of a *permanent* possibility of sensation in man. When I say "I think," "I feel," "I will," "I act," there is the recognition in my words of a permanent unity in man. We seem prompted to believe, though we cannot demonstrate, that the lower orders of mind in the animal world, while they must include some kind of consciousness, have not this sense of personality—self-consciousness in its fullest meaning—a distinct recognition of the ego. We are accustomed to employ the term soul or spirit to denote this sense of personality, and adopting it as conveying a distinct fact of consciousness, we may reason thus: As spirits we are conscious of intercourse with other beings, whose personality we recognise as analogous with our own. We hold communion with fellow-men as free personalities like ourselves. But the actual limits of that intercourse we cannot believe to be the actual limits of personality in the universe. We reasonably conclude that there is an ascending order of spiritual beings, that we are in a universe in which there are countless numbers of free personalities. If so, then it is a necessary step in thought that we conceive this universe of free beings under the government of an infinite Personality, for as they are not the cause of their own existence we must seek it in the existence of One who Himself is a Personality, and whose freedom is absolute, and not merely relative as that of His creatures must be.

And here, before we pass on to the ethical argument, it will

be necessary to deal with a difficulty which has been formulated very distinctly by Dr. Mansel in his "Limits of Religious Thought," but which can be shown to be only a difficulty in appearance and not in reality. As all knowledge is relative, Dr. Mansel, following Kant and Sir William Hamilton, has denied the possibility of obtaining anything more than a regulative knowledge of God, and therefore of finding any other foundation on which to rest than the instinctive faith which is irresistible but not explicable. "We cannot transcend our own personality, as we cannot transcend our own relation to time; and to speak of an absolute and infinite Person is simply to use language to which, however true it may be in a superhuman sense, no mode of human thought can possibly attach itself."

Now it will be evident that the difficulty which is here formulated is only a metaphysical difficulty. Knowledge is a relation of consciousness to its object. The object of thought may be either out of myself or in myself. I may make self an object of thought. I may make what is called the material world an object of thought; then there is a relation between consciousness as the permanent self, and consciousness as affected by impressions and sensations, in other words, between consciousness as subjective and consciousness as objective. It is of no real consequence that I am metaphysically incapable of passing beyond the region of consciousness. Dr. Mansel's position is, you cannot be said to know God, because when you begin to reason about His absolute and infinite nature you are involved in insoluble contradictions. But why should that be any objection to my affirmation that I know God? I know Him as I know all things, through the revelations of my consciousness. All higher knowledge is an impossibility, only because a transcendental knowledge. "In the impotence of reason," says Dr. Mansel, "we are obliged to take refuge in faith, and to believe that an Infinite Being exists, though we know not how."[1] "The religious sentiment compels man to

[1] Page 121.

believe and to worship a Supreme Being, and this is an evidence of His existence, but not an exhibition of His nature." But what is a faith which precedes all knowledge? What is a conviction without an idea? The external world compels me to believe in its existence, not because of a sentiment of externality, but by a revelation in consciousness. A sentiment or a faith about that or even towards that which is absolutely unknown and unknowable is a contradiction. Faith and knowledge may be coexistent, contemporary, coincident; but knowledge cannot be the offspring of faith, for faith is impossible without knowledge. Man believes in God because God reveals Himself to his consciousness. But to know God is not to know God perfectly; it is not to comprehend His existence, but to apprehend it. "There are three main elements," says Dr. Newman in his "Grammar of Assent,"[1] "which Nature furnishes for acquiring the knowledge of God; viz., our own minds, the voice of mankind, and the course of the world, *i.e.*, of human life and affairs. The informations which these three convey to us teach us the Being and attributes of God, our responsibility to Him, our prospect of reward and punishment, to be somehow brought about according as we obey or disobey Him. And the most authoritative of these three means of knowledge, as being especially our own, is our own mind, whose informations give us the rule by which we test, interpret, and correct what is presented to us for belief, whether by the universal testimony of mankind or by the history of society and the world." These "informations" to which Dr. Newman refers, make my knowledge. My ground of belief in them, and therefore in the knowledge resulting, is not that I am blindly impelled to believe, but that it is reasonable that I should believe. And in accepting the evidence of consciousness I am not, with the Transcendental school of Germany, making my ground of knowledge an intuition of God, which is absurd,—for how can the finite have an intuition of the infinite?—nor am I maintaining, with Cousin and the Eclectic school

[1] Page 384.

of France, that my reason is impersonal and therefore itself Divine; but I know Him as I know all things, by a union between the revelation of phenomena and the laws of thought. This subject has been very fully discussed in Lectures II., III., and IV. of Mr. Conder's "Basis of Faith," to which we refer the reader. "The relativity of knowledge," he well observes, "in place of being any impediment, disability, or limitation of our knowledge, is that which renders knowledge possible, and on which its worth and truth depend." "Philosophic scepticism has no valid foundation. If the phenomena and facts of the universe and of human nature be such as to afford adequate evidence of a personal eternal First Cause, there is nothing in the nature of knowledge to blast the evidence with suspicion of untrustworthiness, or to hinder our knowledge of God from being the most certain, as it must needs be the noblest, the most fruitful, and the most necessary part of all our knowledge. For the eye of reason were a poor and feeble thing if, like the bodily eye, it could behold all things in the light of knowledge, but could not lift its vision to the Source of light." As to Dr. Mansel himself and his theory, it has been remarked by Dr. Martineau:[1] "Our author's logic in mowing down its thistle field, inconsiderately mows off its own legs. He cuts away the only support on which religious thought can rest or move; and nothing short of an unqualified ontological scepticism is in agreement with his premises. He cleverly pursues and breaks the track of many a system of erratic metaphysics; but, fascinated with the hunt of delusion and incompetency, he pushes the rout too far, and, as it seems to us, rides over the brink of the solid world, and falls into the abysses."

II. *The Ethical argument*, or that from the moral nature and the moral world. This argument is employed frequently, and by some of the ablest defenders of Theism is esteemed much the most powerful. It may be stated briefly as an argument for the existence of a *personal Ruler* in the universe. There exists in man what is called a moral nature, that is, the

[1] "Phil. Essays," vol. i. p. 232.

power to distinguish the quality of actions as right or wrong, and an active principle which impels the mind to do or to forbear from doing, which connects with the one class of actions approval and happiness, and with the other class of actions disapproval and unhappiness. Now we may state at the outset that the argument is entirely separable from all psychological theories as to the origin of the moral sense and moral power. It can be of no moment to decide whether conscience is the product of association and the growth of experience, or an original element in the mental constitution. Granting that there is the fact of consciousness, which the most inveterate sceptic is unable to deny, the sense of moral obligation, however accounted for, the next step in the argument is to connect with this undoubted fact of consciousness the moral order of the world. The moral in man presupposes the moral in the universe. Actions cannot be moral except in society. Moral order implies the existence of beings in conscious relation to one another. Regarding the universe as the realm of physical laws alone, we reach the idea of physical efficiency or non-efficiency, but not of moral quality. We may speak of a physical system as "out of order," but we mean by that not that there is any moral feeling implicated in that want of order, but simply that the adjustments of physical laws are not observed. But when we say of a human being that he is right or wrong, we think of more than his physical relations to the material things around him, we think of moral beings in their relation to one another. Then follows the third step in the argument. Admitting the existence of moral order in the universe, can we conceive of it as self-sustained? Does not reason require that we place at the head of it a moral Being?

Now it is well at this point to observe the logical difficulty which has been suggested by Mr. J. S. Mill.[1] We give it in his own words. "Conceding, for the sake of argument, that the moral sentiment is purely of the mind's own growth, the obligation of duty entirely independent of experience

[1] "Essays on Religion," pp. 164–5.

and acquired impressions, it may yet be maintained that this feeling of obligation rather excludes, than compels, the belief in a Divine Legislator merely as the source of the obligation; and, as a matter of fact, the obligation of duty is both theoretically acknowledged and practically felt in the fullest manner by many who have no positive belief in God, though seldom, probably, without habitual and familiar reference to Him as an ideal conception. But if the existence of God as a wise and just lawgiver is not a necessary part of the feelings of morality, it may still be maintained that those feelings make His existence eminently desirable. No doubt they do, and that is the great reason why we find that good men and women cling to the belief and are pained by its being questioned. But surely it is not legitimate to assume that in the order of the universe whatever is desirable is true." But it may be replied that this feeling of the necessity of a moral Ruler is more than a mere optimistic feeling of desirableness. It is the instinctive reason of man demanding that the correspondence between the universe as a moral order and man's consciousness as a moral consciousness shall be regarded not as a work of chance but as the expression of a presiding and governing mind and will. It is quite true, as Kant has shown, while admitting the immeasurable force of the moral argument, that as a demand of the speculative reason it is impossible to furnish a demonstration of the existence of a transcendent Personality with no other materials than the phenomena of experience and the laws of thought, but while falling short of logical demonstration, the argument is such as is overwhelming to the practical reason. We cannot escape the suggestion of our deepest instincts, beyond the moral order there must be a moral Being, otherwise the order sustains itself, which is inconceivable. Dr. Newman has laid great stress on the testimony of conscience in his "Grammar of Assent," Part I. ch. v. § 1; Part II. ch. x. § 1. No sooner is conscience quickened into action than it demands as the completion of its own active representation the existence and authority of a great Being who is

Ruler and Judge. "As we have an initial knowledge of the universe through sense, so do we in the first instance begin to learn about its Lord and God from conscience; and as from particular acts of that instinct, whereby experiences which ultimately are mere images on the retina, become the means of our perceiving something real beyond them, we go on to draw the general conclusion that there is a vast external world, so from the recurring instances in which conscience acts, forcing upon us importunately the mandate of a Superior, we have fresh and fresh evidence of the existence of a Sovereign Ruler from whom these particular dictates which we experience proceed, so that, with limitations, we may, by means of that induction from particular experiences, have as good a warrant for concluding the ubiquitous presence of one supreme Master, as we have from parallel experiences of sense, for assenting to the fact of a multiform and vast world, material and mental. Conscience does not repose on itself, but vaguely reaches forward to something beyond self, and dimly discerns a sanction higher than self for its decisions, as evidenced in that keen sense of obligation and responsibility which enforces them. And hence it is that we are accustomed to speak of conscience as a voice—a voice, or the echo of a voice, imperative and constraining, like no other dictate in the whole of our experience. If the cause of these emotions does not belong to the visible world, the object to which perception is directed must be supernatural and Divine, and thus the phenomena of conscience, as a dictate, avail to impress the imagination with the picture of a supreme Governor, a Judge, holy, just, powerful, all-seeing, retributive, and is the creative principle of religion, as the moral sense is the principle of ethics." As Dr. Newman, however, uses this principle of conscience somewhat too extensively, making "obedience to conscience" the seed of grace and the offer of salvation, evidently pointing to the external authority on which he inculcates dependence, it is well to adduce the testimony of another great thinker of an entirely different school, Dr. James Martineau, who is equally

decided in his preference of the moral argument. "To mark the step of thought which crosses the line into the hemisphere of religion, it is made when we affirm that over us, and in relation to us, the all-perfect Mind *exists*. Devout faith is a belief of real Being on the strength of *what ought to be*. If you look at it from the outside, you may call it the apotheosis of moral aspirations; if you name it from the interior, you will say, it is the revelation of God in the conscience. The former expression describes the ascent of my thought to its object; the latter, the descent of its object into my thought."[1] Similar to this position of Dr. Martineau's is that of Mr. Thomas Erskine of Linlathen, who represents a large school of thinkers relying much on the moral nature of man for the support of religious conviction. "When I attentively consider," says Mr. Erskine, "what is going on in my conscience, the chief thing forced on my notice is, that I find myself face to face with a purpose not my own, for I am often conscious of resisting it, but which dominates me and makes itself felt as ever present, in the very root and reason of my being. This consciousness of a purpose concerning me that I should be a good man—right, true and unselfish—is the first firm footing I have in the region of religious thought; for I cannot dissociate the idea of a purpose from that of a purposer, and I cannot but identify this purposer with the Author of my being and the Being of all beings; and, further, I cannot but regard this purpose towards me as the unmistakable indication of His own character."[2] The same testimony to the value of the argument may be gathered from the writings of Kant, although he admitted that it was not *critically* sustainable in the sphere of pure reason. "The whole course of our life must be subject to moral maxims; but this is impossible, unless with the moral law, which is a mere idea, reason con-

[1] "Ideal Substitutes for God," p. 13.

[2] "The Spiritual Order and other papers," pp. 47, 48, quoted by Professor Flint in the appendix to his valuable work on Theism, in which the argument from conscience is fully described, pp. 210–226.

nects an efficient cause which ordains to all conduct which is in conformity with the moral law, an issue, either in this or in the other life, which is in exact conformity with our highest aims. Thus, without a God, and without a world, invisible to us now, but hoped for, the glorious ideas of morality are, indeed, objects of approbation and of admiration, but cannot be springs of purpose and action. For they do not satisfy all the aims which are natural to every rational being, and which are determined *à priori* by pure reason itself and necessary."[1] And at the conclusion of his criticism of the practical reason he observes: "There are two things which fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration, the oftener and the more continuously the mind is occupied in their contemplation—the starry heavens above me, and the moral law within me. In both I find myself lost, only able to conjecture, because both are hidden in clouds and in infinitudes beyond my reach. I see them before me, and connect them immediately with the consciousness of my existence. The moral law I trace to my invisible self, and that I connect with a true infinity, with which I have a universal and necessary union."[2] It will be evident that this argument from conscience is capable of expansion to almost any extent, and our limits forbid our further dwelling upon it. We conclude this branch of the moral argument with the following brief indication of its points. Conscience is a *law* which implies a *Lawgiver;* a *command* which must be given by a *personal Ruler;* a *relation* to the order of the universe which cannot be imagined except as sustained by a *moral Being;* an imperfect *revelation* of the meaning and end of human existence which points to *God* as the *ideal* of goodness and the *motive* of life, and to *another world* as *completing* the work of this; a *witness* to man's connection with an ascending *scale of rational and moral beings* of whom *God* is the supreme Head, and amongst whom the

[1] "Critique of Pure Reason:" "Transcendental Doctrine of Method," ch. ii. § 2.

[2] Kant's Werke, vol. v. p. 167.

law of right and wrong in its purest form must be eternally recognised.

III. *The Historical argument*, or that from the consent of mankind, as testified in the facts of human history. This argument has been criticised like all the rest by the sceptic. 1. It has been represented as an appeal to authority, and therefore not strictly philosophical. "The authority invoked is that of mankind generally, and specially of some of its wisest men; particularly such as were in other respects conspicuous examples of breaking loose from received prejudices. Socrates and Plato, Bacon, Locke and Newton, Descartes and Leibnitz, are common examples."[1] 2. It has also been represented as a *petitio principii*, because it is inferred from the generality of the belief that it is inherent in the constitution of man, and that as such it must be true, because the human mind was made by One who would not deceive His creatures. 3. The evidence of the universal consent and of the instinctive belief has been questioned. "The religious belief of savages is not belief in the God of natural theology, but a mere modification of the crude generalisation which ascribes life, consciousness and will to all natural powers of which they cannot perceive the source or control the operation. And the divinities believed in are as numerous as those powers. Each river, fountain, or tree has a divinity of its own. To see in this blunder of primitive ignorance the hand of the Supreme Being implanting in His creatures an instinctive knowledge of His existence, is a poor compliment to the Deity." If it be an instinctive belief why is it not universal?

The reply to these objections is not difficult. In fact, they are objections rather to the mode in which the historical argument is employed than to the essence of it. 1. In appealing to the consent of mankind, and to the testimony of the wisest and greatest of mankind, we are not calling in authority to limit the freedom of research, but simply employing a legitimate induction. If most men have been led

[1] Mill.

to a certain conclusion, and *à fortiori* the wisest and greatest men, we *negatively* infer that it is not irrational, and *positively* that it accords at least to a large degree with the tendencies of human thought. This is not the same as saying that the belief in God is intuitive, or that there is a religious faculty in man as man, but it at least throws the *onus probandi* on the unbeliever. 2. It is not necessary to reason that the belief in God is "*inherent in the constitution of man*," and *therefore* true. The argument is not that *universality* is the evidence of *truth*, but that *universality* shows its *adaptation to man as man*. If it be shown to be reasonable on other grounds, that at least is a considerable confirmation of its truth *relatively to man*, which is all that it is needful to prove. 3. As to the non-universality of the belief in God and the case of Fetichism, as showing that the savage mind merely generalises the idea of personality, the objection of the sceptic has no force except upon two assumptions which may be confidently resisted, that the non-universality arises from a cause in human nature as such, and that the savage with his crude generalisations is a type of primitive man. There is no occasion to admit either of these assumptions, for they are such—even though it be proved that there are nations absolutely devoid of the belief in a Supreme Being. The fact of the absence of that belief may be proved, on the other hand, to be entirely exceptional, where it is clearly certified, and traced to causes which really have no connection with anything which is properly included in the foundation of human nature. The savage *may be* a degraded man. The knowledge of God *may* have been lost by the tribes which now show no sign of its possession. We cannot reason on such facts on the mere arbitrary theory of primitive savageism. We are bound to examine the evidence of the earliest condition of man as it is presented by many coincident streams of information—ethnological, archæological, mythological, philological, etymological—and it may be confidently stated that the result, so far as it can be ascertained, of researches in those departments, is undoubtedly to push back a

primitive monotheism to the earliest ages of the world. As to all dogmatism on the ground of evolutionary principles, we simply claim the freedom which we grant,—that which is a mere hypothesis must not arrest the investigations of the philosophic inquirer into the origin of human beliefs.

We now pass on to describe the historical argument itself. It has been generally stated in the form of the *consensus gentium* by ancient authors such as *Cicero* in his "De Natura Deorum," i. 17, "Tusc. Quæst.," i. 13, "De Leg," i. 8; *Seneca*, "Epist.," 117; *Plutarch*, and *Clement of Alexandria* in his "Stromata," v. 14; *Lactantius*, the Christian apologist, states it in his "Divine Institutes," i. 2. In modern times it has been very fully wrought out by *Ebrard*, "Apologetik," vol. ii., and by *Baumstark*, "Christian Apologetics on an Anthropological Basis." We may divide the argument into two branches: 1. The argument from antiquity, which aims to prove that however far the researches of inquirers may go, they find nothing to militate against the view that the belief in one God is coeval with man. 2. The argument from the history of Christianity as a pure Theism, showing that where the doctrine of Theism is proclaimed it universally commends itself to the approval of men.

1. The historical argument from the extreme antiquity of religion and the earliest traceable forms of religious worship, cannot of course be pushed to the extent of a scientific demonstration of the universality and necessity of the idea of a personal God. It is like all historical arguments, one of probability only, but the probability is becoming more and more convincing as the researches of profound students into ethnology and mythology and comparative etymology unfold the primitive condition of mankind. We are not concerned here to maintain the view of a *primitive revelation* to mankind, though that is a possible interpretation of the facts held by some, and has received considerable support from the writings of the distinguished statesman Mr. Gladstone. Nor do we deem it of any importance to canvass the naturalistic theories of the origin of religion, for it is of no moment to the argument

whether we regard the idea of God as a τέλος, to which the mind of man has been gradually led by processes of thought, or as the objective form of an innate subjective tendency, or as the product of a faculty, a constitutive element, in human consciousness. These are irrelevant questions to the historian. He looks at the facts alone. It seems to be now admitted that the confused worship, which is called polytheistic, is not the earliest form of worship in the case of any of the larger portions of the human family whose mythology we can examine critically. Whether we style the earliest traceable worship Henotheism or Monotheism, that is whether the unity we recognise be unity of principle or unity of personality, the human family would seem to have begun with the religious adoration of a supreme Power. Pfleiderer, one of the ablest writers in Germany on the philosophy of religion, in his work "Die Religion, ihr Wesen und ihre Geschichte," 2 vols., has traced at great length the history of religion, in his second volume (as also Ebrard in his "Apologetik"). The following is the substance of Pfleiderer's investigations: When we examine most of the heathen religions in their oldest portions, we find an agreement in certain simple fundamental features, and this agreement is fully confirmed among nations of kindred stock, an identity in the terms running through their language. The Greek word Ζεύς, the name of the highest deity, and common to all the Greek dialects, is the same as the Latin *Jov*, the root of the word *Jupiter*, with the Anglo-Saxon *Tiu*, and the old high German *Zio*; and all these are identical with the Sanscrit *Dyu*; and this word, the radical meaning of which is *to beam forth*, is an appellation in later use for *heaven*, but in the oldest songs of the *Vedas* (the original documents of the Hindoo religion), it is a popular name for the highest god and the father of gods and men, by the side of whom is set *the Earth* as the wife and first mother. This God of Heaven, *Dyu*, it is true, afterwards, is lost in the chief god of the Indian Arians, *Indra* (Jupiter pluvius), but as he is represented expressly as the *Son of Heaven and Earth*, we can trace

beyond doubt the fact, that originally *Heaven and Earth* were the highest deities, besides that Indra himself is a representation of heaven and earth in one special aspect, as subject to atmospheric changes of appearance. Among the Greeks the radical name for the highest deity, *Zeus*, originally signifying the shining heaven, confirms this, for he is called the father of gods and men; and *Earth*, *Demeter* (Γῆ μήτηρ), mother earth, or *Dione*, or *Here*, sits by his side as wife and first mother. In like manner *Juno* is the corresponding feminine to Jupiter, as Varro long ago observed with the meaning heaven and earth, for as he learnedly remarked, all the gods and goddesses in their last origin have sprung from heaven and earth. Among the Germans too, the old Aryan *Tiu* or *Zio* must have been at first the name of the supreme deity, for the race itself is called after him *Deutsche*, from *Tiusko*, *i.e.*, sons of *Tiu*; but as *Dyu* was lost in *Indra*, so likewise *Zio* was lost in the more lively *Wodan*, the god of the stormy, troubled heaven; and there also an earth goddess, in every case, is beside the God of Heaven as the first mother beside the first father. Hence it may be concluded that the Aryan peoples previous to their separation, and in their primitive, prehistorical times, worshipped heaven and earth as the highest deities. We can deduce the same from what we know of the Semitic races, who worshipped a god of the high place or heaven under different names, *Bel*, *El*, *Baal*, and a female deity of the fruitful earth, under the names *Mylitta*, *Aschera*, *Baaltis*, etc.; and that this may be ascribed to their very earliest period, when all the Semitic races inhabited one common seat, is evident from the fact that the *Arabians*, so different from the other races, and the *oldest Hebrew*, agree with the rest. We may add to this testimony that of the Egyptian religion, with its original pairs of deities, *Ra* and *Neith*, *Ptah* and *Pacht*, *Ammon* and *Mut*, *Osiris* and *Isis*, which are only different representations of the male and female sides of the life of Nature. The Chinese, made the same duality the foundation of their worship, deriving it far more distinctly from an original unity. The word *Tien*

is the primitive symbol for *Heaven*, but not, as Professor Max Müller seems to think, in the sense of shining sky, but rather in the sense of overruling vastness, power. There is a primitive root in their language, *Ti*, which denotes God, and Professor Legge of Oxford decides that it symbolises "lordship and government." The two names *Tien* and *Ti* are both used. "*Tien* from the earliest times has had much of the force of the name *Jahve* as explained by God Himself to Moses. *Ti* has presented that absolute deity in the relation to men of their lord and governor. Tî was to the Chinese fathers, I believe, exactly what God was to our fathers, whenever they took the great name on their lips," [1] and this is evidence at least five thousand years old, if not of still greater antiquity. "Considering," says Pfleiderer, "this universal agreement among the various peoples of the earth in the primitive elements of their religions, we may safely conclude that in the first origin of man's religion, heaven and earth were the chief deities, *i.e.*, regarded as a living Being, that to which the dimly felt sense of dependence was chiefly referred. Heaven and earth taken together represent the all-embracing universality." The case of the Chinese, who from the very first, as Professor Legge shows, distinguished spirits from the supreme God, and never paid them the same, but a subordinate worship, shows that the duality of heaven and earth was not the result of mere contemplation of Nature, but rather arose from the degradation of the idea of unity, in the worship of external things, to which man soon fell when he left a pure monotheism. It will be evident that this branch of the historical argument is one capable of any amount of support from the facts which are being accumulated to a vast degree in modern times, and that there will arise differences in the interpretation of the facts. The one point on which all will agree is that *religion* is, as Professor Max Müller remarks, "if not as old as the world, at least as old as the world we know. As soon almost as we know anything of the thoughts and feelings of man, we find him in possession of re-

[1] Legge's "The Religions of China," 1880, p. 11.

ligion, or rather possessed by religion. The oldest literary documents are almost everywhere religious. Our earth, as Herder says, owes the seeds of all higher culture to religious tradition, whether literary or oral. Even if we go beyond the age of literature, if we explore the deepest levels of human thought, we can discover, in the crude ore which was made to supply the earliest coins or counters of the human mind, the presence of religious ingredients. Before the Aryan languages separated—and who is to tell how many thousand years before the first hymn of the Veda or the first line of Homer that ethnic schism may have happened?—there existed in them the expressions which afterwards became the name of God." [1] If religion is thus involved in the earliest traces of man's thought, it is only a fair conclusion that that fact of religion rests on an idea of an object of worship, for it is much more reasonable to suppose that the thought of the object suggested the worship than that the disposition to worship sought for an object. It is hard to see why man should worship unless he has thought of an object, being himself superior to all other creatures on earth, and therefore being led to the feeling of reverence by thinking of that which is above himself. Weakness and fear would account for prostration, but not for worship. The most primitive worship which the Chinese paid was not characterized by mere abject fear, but rather by thankful recognition of benevolence in the Supreme. This, however, is not a point which the data very clearly determine in regard to worship generally. Religion was not at first the degraded thing it afterwards became. If it were the offspring of fear, we should expect it to be polytheistic in its origin. The evidence points to its simplicity, comparative purity, and reverential rather than slavish character.

2. The pure Theism of Christianity has adapted itself to all the varieties of mankind. This is a fact testified by Christian history and by the work of Christian missions. If the theistic

[1] Max Müller's Hibbert Lectures on the "Origin and Growth of Religion," p. 4.

conception as it is presented in the Bible is artificial and has no true foundation in reason, it is hard to explain the successes of Christianity, for they have been for the most part won by rational forces, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, and often against immense disadvantage. "Christian Theism alone," as Professor Flint remarks, "gives us a perfect representation of God. It precedes and surpasses reason, especially in the disclosure of the depths of fatherly love which are in the heart of the infinite Jehovah, but it nowhere contradicts reason —nay, it incorporates all the findings of reason. It presents as one great and brilliant light all the scattered sparks of truth which scintillate amidst the darkness of heathendom; it combines into a living unity all the separate elements of positive truth which are to be found in systems like Pantheism, Deism, Rationalism; it excludes all that is false in views lower than or contrary to its own."[1] If so, if Christian Theism is the highest form of Theism, then the fact that it triumphs wherever it is fairly in conflict with other forms of religion, and is advancing manifestly to the subjugation of the world to itself, while not necessarily demonstrating its truth, is an argument of strong probability for its adaptation to the reason and nature of man, which can only be overthrown by the counter argument, viz., that which proves that in accepting it man is accepting an injurious falsehood.

IV. *The Providential argument.* We now pass to the last of the moral arguments specified above, viz., that which is founded on the evidences of a moral government among mankind, which may be named the providential argument, as it rests upon the fact of an omniscient, allwise, just and benevolent foresight and control of the world, which beyond and above the physical laws of Nature, while at the same time, by means of those laws, maintains a moral system and secures a constant moral advancement among mankind. It will be convenient to divide the subject thus indicated, which is of vast extent, under three branches of evidence. 1. There are

[1] Baird: Lecture on "Theism," pp. 49, 50.

general facts in the condition and history of man which are evidence of a moral government exercised in the world. 2. There are *particular facts* in the history of individuals, communities, and nations, which point to the providential maintenance of a moral system and the will of a righteous Ruler, in actual force among men. 3. While there is undeniably an imperfection and impurity in the aspect both of the physical and moral worlds, there is yet a preponderance of good over evil, and a manifest *tendency of things towards a higher order*, which harmonizes with the existence of a moral government not as yet altogether revealed. These branches of the evidence we will now examine.

1. An unbiassed observation of the condition and history of man gathers abundant evidence of *general facts* which prove that *there is a moral government exercised in the world.* This is the subject of the first part of Butler's "Analogy," and more particularly of chapters ii., iii., and iv. The main principles on which Butler rests are these. (1) That there is in man a capacity of happiness and misery which is connected with voluntary actions. (2) That, *generally speaking*, happiness is identified with virtuous conduct, misery with the contrary. (3) That man is able to foresee consequences, and in so far as he is able to foresee them, regards them as rewards and punishments. (4) That man is manifestly in a state of probation and trial, in which he encounters difficulty and danger. (5) That the present life being imperfect points to a future life in which the moral system, here only partially revealed and in its commencement, will be fully manifested and completed. The last of these principles may be disputed, and therefore need not here be insisted upon. It is not absolutely necessary to prove that a moral system is either understood or destined to perfection; the main point is the existence of such a system at all at any stage of it, and to any extent. If it be granted that it is not a deceptive appearance, but the fair induction of fact, we may reasonably conclude that it is a system maintained by One capable of revealing and completing it hereafter. No one will

deny the connection of pain and pleasure with the moral nature of man. However we explain that connection, it is a fact that what we morally approve we think of as either immediately or remotely for happiness, what we morally condemn we regard as either immediately or remotely connected with unhappiness. Nor is it at all a contradiction of this principle that good men suffer and that bad men are prosperous. The moral instincts of man disconnect the goodness and the suffering and the badness and prosperity, and while they remain pure moral instincts, they still hold fast to the primary dictate of conscience that whatever *appears* to the contrary, the goodness is happiness, and the badness is unhappiness. This is wonderfully testified in the writings of Plato, certainly one of the profoundest intellects and one of the loftiest natures of the world. The prosperity of the wicked is not happiness, says Plato, and the sufferings of the righteous do not prove him to be unhappy. It is no answer to this universal moral affirmation to say the mind of man *generalises* the tendencies of things and *tradition* names the classes of actions without any absolute distinction between them. If the constitution of the world is such that the tendencies of things lead to the distinction and evolve the tradition, that is evidence of a moral order in the constitution of the world and therefore of a moral Ruler, if that order is both caused and maintained. But we go further than the *moral affirmation.* The distribution of pleasure and pain in the world is manifestly not capricious, nor arbitrary, but evidence of a system of rewards and punishments. Here of course we must be careful of an extreme application of a principle which yet is substantially confirmed by facts. The distinction must be borne in mind between natural law and moral law. There are many facts which come under the former which we are unable, in our shortsightedness, to put in any special relation to moral law. The shipwreck which destroys the lives of good and evil alike, and which produces a large amount of suffering over a very extended area in society, may be attributed to physical laws; but what we understand in

the occurrence as the effect of natural laws, we may be utterly unable to understand in the moral sphere. It does not follow that the same suffering produced by the same event is in the moral system at all the same to all to whom it is sent. To one it may be simply a moral issue of evil, to another it may be not in any sense punishment, but discipline and even reward. A virtuous man is as truly exposed to physical evil as a vicious, but his virtue may still be abundantly rewarded. Looking at the world as a whole we have a right to point to the general fact that "virtue is its own reward," that those who live the virtuous life escape many evils, find many pure enjoyments, maintain the constitution of bodily and mental life best, find themselves surrounded with the approval of fellow-men, are really the truest specimens of manhood. The individual is best developed, society is best developed, the world is best developed, the future of humanity is best secured, on the principles of virtue and not on the contrary. This will not be denied even by the atheistic school, for they boldly assert their advocacy of the cause of truth and morality. Butler's two illustrations are undoubtedly of great weight. The education of children cannot be carried out on any other hypothesis than that of moral order. No one will dare to teach his child that he is to disregard the quality and tendency of his actions. Plainly, therefore, mankind bear witness to the existence of freedom and moral government in the world. A community which should be entirely under the control of virtuous principles, all whose members are virtuous and whose life is an exercise of power on the lines of virtue, would be acknowledged to be the highest and most powerful community in the world. "It would plainly be superior to all others, and the world must gradually come under its empire." If the manifest tendency of things, then, is to the superiority of virtue, there must be an adaptation of the constitution of the universe to that tendency, and therefore there must be a moral order, invisible and imperfectly established, but on the way to being made manifest and complete hereafter. We may conclude this branch of the

argument by appealing to the undoubted fact that in all nations and notwithstanding all varieties of moral standards, there is the same broad distinction between right and wrong, and the same connection recognised between right and happiness and wrong and misery. It is of no importance in the argument, from this universal instinct, as was observed by Sir James Macintosh, that it is erroneously applied. The barbarian may esteem right what the civilized man condemns. But in every mind there is the reference to a supposd system of moral distinctions, and if there were not the inherent belief that the world was so constituted as to maintain those distinctions it is hard to see why they should continue to be observed. The fact that they remain notwithstanding all degradation in the race is surely a testimony to the depth of their root in human nature, and in the order of the world. We now leave the general facts, and proceed to consider—

2. The *particular facts* in the history of individuals, communities, and nations, which point to the providential maintenance of a moral government, and to the work of a righteous Ruler among men. The view of the world and of human history presented to us in the Scriptures, is that of a vast moral scheme ordered in progress and development towards definite ends. In other words, the development of humanity, the development of civilization and culture, has everywhere been conditioned by the development of religion. It is not possible to enumerate the facts which illustrate this principle. But the gist of the historical proof may be said to lie in three special particulars: first, that the main events of the historic world have a supernatural character attributed to them: secondly, that human history is characterized by an ethical, teleological progress; there is a moral grandeur in its facts testifying to the existence and agency of a higher will: and thirdly, not only have all nations agreed in connecting the moral and religious with their history, but their testimony has been most powerful at the time of their greatest prosperity and magnificence. It is impossible to contemplate the great catastrophes

of the world, such as the flood, and those of great empires, as the fall of Babylon, of Israel, of the Greeks, of the Roman empire, of the Byzantine power; the destruction of great cities, such as that of Jerusalem, Rome, and Constantinople; and the religious facts, such as the testimony and martyrdom of saints, and the cross of Christ, without feeling that there is a moral significance in such facts which points to a moral order and a moral Ruler. How often that which has appeared to be ruin and destruction, has been proved to be a glorious renovation of the world. The preparation of the world for Christianity is one of the branches of the historical argument which has received great attention. It has been observed by Dr. Bushnell[1] "that if we glance along the inventory of the matters of the world's history, recalling chapters by their titles, and only having in mind the relation of so many things to the central figure, Christ and His kingdom, we shall find that in His glorious person we get the key by which their mystery and meaning are solved, their practical harmony expounded. Thus we have the Jewish dispersion before Christ in all the principal cities of the world, and the establishment there of the synagogue worship, so that when the apostles go abroad with their message, they have places in which to speak made ready, assemblies gathered, and what is more than all, minds prepared by Jewish symbols and associations to receive the meaning of the new gospel, as related to a first dispensation of law, without which its true place in God's economy is undiscovered; without which, too, it is bolted into the world separately from all historic connections and from all the evidences to be shown for it by its fulfilment of ideas hid in ancient rites and forms." It has been often remarked that the appearance of Jesus Christ appeared to be the fulfilment of many movements in the course of human affairs, which might be said to reach a climax at that time. Philosophy had culminated and exhausted itself without answering the questions of the human mind. The world was ready for a higher wisdom than man's. Political power had received its greatest

[1] "Nature and the Supernatural," p. 324.

worldly form in the Roman empire, which, while it promoted the conception of a universal humanity, was itself an utter failure to realize that conception. The heathen religions were undermined by scepticism, and the masses of the people were as sheep without a shepherd, exposed to the attacks of tyrannical power, and possessed of no recuperative moral principle by which they could rise out of physical and social ruin. "When human history has been brewing in so great a ferment for so many ages, all these great preparations are ready, calling for the King with their common voice, and saying the fulness of the time is come." One of the most striking testimonies to the connection in the human mind between historical facts and moral order is found in the ancient tragedy, where well known characters and events are employed as symbols of great moral principles and truths. The possibility of a philosophy of history is itself an evidence that there is moral order in the midst of the multiplicity of the world's events and changes. From the time of Augustine, whose great work the "Civitas Dei," or City of God, may be said to be the first attempt to look at history as a revelation of Divine purpose and truth, down to the present time when the philosophy of history has become a recognised branch of profound study, the fact has been universally admitted, and can only be rejected by a perverse ingenuity of scepticism, that the world is a sphere of a moral progress, which however unable we are completely to understand it, may be marked out by great crises as a real unfolding of a lofty and benevolent purpose, the gradual improvement and elevation of man. This subject has been dealt with to some extent by Dr. Mac Cosh in his work "On the Moral Government of God."

3. We now pass on to the third branch of the providential argument, viz., that while there is undeniably an imperfection and impurity in the aspect, both of the physical and moral worlds, there is yet a preponderance of good over evil, and a manifest tendency of things to a higher order which harmonizes with the existence of a moral government not as yet perfectly

revealed. With regard to the imperfections, so-called, of physical Nature, we are being taught daily by the discoveries of modern science, that that which appears to us to be imperfection may prove to be but a stage of progress. Any one object criticised by itself may simply perplex us, but viewed in relation to the general system of things it may hold a true place and fulfil a true function. Mr. Mill's "Essay on Nature" has expressed fully the difficulties of the sceptical mind on this subject. His arguments are vitiated by his not distinguishing Nature as in the hands of a moral Governor, and Nature as in itself moral. He points to the appearance of reckless cruelty in the cosmic forces. "They go straight to their end without regarding what or whom they crush on the road. Optimists, in their attempts to prove that whatever is, is right, are obliged to maintain, not that Nature ever turns one step from her path to avoid trampling us to destruction, but that it would be very unreasonable of us to expect that she should. Pope's 'shall gravitation cease when you go by?' may be a just rebuke to any one who should be so silly as to expect common human morality from Nature. But if the question were between two men instead of between a man and a natural phenomenon, that triumphant apostrophe would be thought a rare piece of impudence. A man who should persist in hurling stones, or firing cannon, when another man 'goes by,' and having killed him should urge a similar plea in exculpation, would very deservedly be found guilty of murder. In sober truth, nearly all the things which men are hanged or imprisoned for doing to one another are Nature's every-day performances." This, however, is an entirely irrelevant criticism of Nature. It is not itself a moral being, and is therefore not morally accountable. What has to be proved is, not that natural forces are moral, but that natural forces are employed by a moral Being for moral ends. The whole objection, therefore, becomes one as to the existence of suffering in the universe. This, it must be admitted, involves a great mystery, which, with our present faculties and light, cannot be perfectly solved.

There are, however, certain counterbalancing principles which we are able to place over against the mysterious prevalence of evil. They are such as these, although the list might be almost indefinitely prolonged :—(1) Evil is often proved to be disguised good. (2) Good and evil are in conflict with one another. (3) On the whole the world shows that the progress is constant and certain towards an entire victory of the good. (4) Wherever there is evil which can be distinctly pronounced *moral* evil, there it is condemned by all healthy well-balanced minds. (5) The advance in material happiness goes hand in hand with the advance in morality. (6) The sufferings of individuals, which are the great stumbling-block, are the results almost entirely, when not traceable to moral evil in the sufferer, of that community of life which is the root of our moral condition and the source of all moral development. (7) The inequalities of the present state can be made to work out a glorious perfection hereafter, and it is quite after the analogy of all development that it should be so. The growth of the physical frame is through a state in which there is much disease and suffering, and the exercise which actually makes strength and maturity, is itself to some extent a painful effort. (8) Looking at the general tendencies of things and apart from individual instances of suffering, there is a preponderance of good in the universe. Life itself is an immeasurable enjoyment. The arrangements of Nature which seem to be indissolubly connected with suffering, such as those in the animal world which provide for the taking of prey, and the defence of the individual against attack, are yet plainly not directly but only indirectly the cause of the suffering, in many cases adapted to speedy extinction of suffering in death or insensibility. (9) The capacity of suffering seems to be in inverse proportion to the beings which suffer. Where the productiveness of Nature leads to immense multiplication of animal existence, as in the lower races, in the marine and insect worlds, there we have every reason to believe from the low nervous organization that the suffering is but small, almost

a vanishing quantity. On the other hand, the higher the organization and the more intelligent the animal, the greater the capacity of suffering; but against that is to be reckoned, the greater capacity of pleasure and the smaller number of individuals. (10) The universe is an ascending scale of beings, its arrangements are adapted to an ascending scale of happiness. The higher the being the wider its scope of enjoyment. To the intellectual observer, the world is a source of happiness, as the gratification of the sense of beauty and of the still higher sense of order and moral progress. And the spiritual man claims a still more exalted position. His satisfaction is provided in truth and goodness, and is the most enduring and real. If, therefore, there is not only the general fact of pleasure to put over against the general fact of pain, but pleasures rise with the beings who enjoy them, with the life of which they are a part, then we may fairly reckon the pains as rather lying round the lower sphere of created existence than appertaining to the whole of it, and we may reasonably expect that as we approach the summit of being the pains will be left behind and the pleasures alone remain. (11) While there is mystery in the universe, because it is a scheme of things only imperfectly understood, yet if creative purpose be admitted at all, it can only be supposed to be in *one Creator*. The theory which attributes the appearances of Nature to a conflict of purposes in two original wills is irrational, for a house divided against itself cannot stand; whereas science itself shows that the order of the universe has been maintained from an indefinite past. If, therefore, *one purpose and will* be behind all the apparent evil of the universe, it is more rational to suppose that in the end good will be educed out of the evil and the Creator be vindicated, than that the will of the Creator is itself evil; for it is easier to think of a good will being obscured and its purpose disguised under apparent evil, than of an evil will bringing forth good and maintaining an order sublimely great and wonderful and benevolent. In short, there is no possibility of reconciling the negative conception of evil with the positive conception of

infinite power, wisdom and steadfastness, without which the universe would fall to pieces. He that creates must be perfectly good. Evil, then, is a cloud which will pass away and leave His perfection shining out like the midday sun in unsullied glory.

We conclude this branch of the argument, which it is not necessary to prolong as it is one of the most familiarly known, and has been ably treated by many writers on natural theology, with the eloquent words of Mr. Conder in his "Basis of Faith," pp. 287–8: "But suppose that in the present stage of our knowledge these riddles remain without a key. Suppose that in this vast scheme and fabric of things, in which Newton's 'child on the seashore' is still the emblem of the true philosopher, there is a residuum of mystery of which we can give no account on any theory, hard to reconcile with our dim notions of goodness and wisdom,—what then? Can infinite wisdom have no secrets? Can nothing be right but what we can explain? What is the sum of these perplexities, were it twenty-fold what it is, compared with the stupendous bulk and immense variety of evidence in proof of creative goodness? Or what is it less than mental or moral obliquity, to listen to nothing in the great chorus of life but its discords; to fix our vision only on the shadows in the landscape; and so to busy our eyes peering into pits and crannies in search of monstrous or abortive shapes, as to have no vision of the vast panorama of earth and sun and sky filled with happy life as with beauty and sunshine? Yes! It is still true that the 'earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.' Putting out of view man, for whom alone suffering has a moral character, both in root and in fruit, and is capable of being transmuted into priceless blessing, the sum of suffering—whether accidental or inevitable—is but a minute fraction of the sum of happiness; a light discount on the immense revenue of conscious enjoyment. In the joy which it is to a healthy, vigorous animal merely to live, and the special pleasure waiting on every sense and conscious function; in the vivid happiness of young creatures

and of children—for ever springing as a fresh fountain of joy, untroubled by the sorrows of so many generations, in the homes of men; in the elaborate variety and exquisite adaptation of the different kinds of food; in the savours and perfumes, the melodies and harmonies, the glorious decorations of colour and form, the delicious glow of sunny warmth and more delicious coolness of the breeze and the wave, the jubilant sense of strenuous exertion and luxurious sweetness of rest, enriching life with so many separate springs of delight, whose charm is heightened by contrast, and by the variety of climates and of seasons; in the complicated yet smoothly balanced adaptation of every creature to its haunts and habits, —the eagle to its soaring flight and lightning-swoop, the whale to its mile-deep plunge in ocean, the fish to its stream or lake, the mole to its burrow, the insect to its leaf; above all, in the imperial happiness of man, not confined like lower creations to some tiny homestead or narrow parish or province of enjoyment, but laying all Nature under tribute; in the profuse and magnificent, yet carefully economised, provision for his wants, comforts, luxuries,—as in coal, iron, gold, lime, granite, free-stone, clay, and other minerals; corn, wine, oil, and other fruits of the soil; in the delights reserved for man alone, of social progress, intellectual culture, generous devotion to noble aims, Godlike virtue, pure and elevated love: in all these, our intellect must surely be dull and our hearts cold, if we do not recognise a vast acclaim of accordant testimony, a mighty chorus of harmonious praise, bearing witness that the goodness of God endureth continually; abundantly uttering the memory of His great goodness, and singing of His righteousness, as the *Father of lights*, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift."

CHAPTER III.

THEISM THE ONLY TRUE BASIS OF MORALITY.

WE have reviewed in outline the arguments for Theism. It will now be an appropriate conclusion to the first part of the whole subject, to add to the theoretic evidence the practical, and show that the denial of Theism is *practically* inadmissible, inasmuch as it involves the overthrow of morality, and therefore the destruction of society and the misery of man. *Atheism*, even in its negative form as Agnosticism, or in its philosophical form as Pantheism, or in its scientific form as Materialism, by removing from morality the support of religion, or reducing that support to a useless sentiment, leaves the moral state of mind to be preserved by that which has been proved inadequate to the task. We are not concerned here to appeal to facts in order to find evidence that atheists are immoral, or that an atheistic people or period is immoral, although much might be adduced which certainly would seem to show that in conspicuous instances, and in the majority of cases, the denial of God has been accompanied with moral evil in the individual and people. But both historically and philosophically, it can be maintained that morality and religion mutually guard one another. This subject has been profoundly treated by such men as *Martensen* ("Christian Ethics"), *Pfleiderer* ("Lectures on the Connection of Religion with Ethics"), and *Luthardt* (on "The Moral Truths of Christianity"). The following somewhat prolonged extract from Luthardt's work will show that we can appeal to the experience of the past as proving that any attempt to separate morality from religion must be a failure.[1]

[1] "Apologetic Lectures on the Moral Truths of Christianity," translated by S. Taylor, for T. T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1876, pp. 15–22.

"There is an internal connection between morality and religion. The tendency of the age sets itself against this maxim, and raises objections to it. Manifold are the efforts of the present day; but their common object is secular culture and its promotion, their common aim to release secular life from the influence of religion, and to place it upon its own foundations. Secular life is so enriched that it seems to need nothing beyond itself, and the desire is felt to comprise its fulness within itself, to the exclusion of all extraneous elements. Religion is regarded as that which is, properly speaking, the most extraneous, because its matter is supermundane, and because it gives to life a reference to a life beyond the world, and thus disturbs the finished self-contained harmony of the world. So far, indeed, as religion consists only in feeling and sentiment, and forms a kind of poetry of life, breathing over it a mild and gentle atmosphere, so far it may be put up with. For in this form it is itself but a product of natural life, it satisfies one of its wants, and well becomes those softer and milder characters to whom it lends a special charm. Hence this religion of sentiment is allowed to pass, and is even admired, especially in women. But as for those whose life is passed among the stern realities of arduous labour or public duties, they have neither room nor leisure for it. In other words, it is useless in the fulfilment of the moral duties of life, and if it will insist upon being religion properly so-called, *i.e.*, upon maintaining its supermundane element, and its conformity with revelation, it is actually obstructive to them, for it is then a foreign element introduced into secular life. The reason why the present age often takes up a position adverse to religion, and seeks to exclude it from connection with its life, is that it may place the latter entirely on its own foundation. What then does the age regard as the foundation of natural life? All its nobler spirits admit that all life rests on moral foundations. To know of nothing beyond material life is esteemed as vulgar, and as casting an objectionable shade over the disposition, by the better minded. Morality is declared to be the fundamental principle

of all life; but this morality is based upon itself and not upon religion. Morality, independent of religion, is the latest maxim of the age, the maxim by which it seeks to justify its rejection of Christianity. This is the question which really involves the decision of the various questions which agitate our times.

"But this maxim of an irreligious morality is by no means new. It is, on the contrary, an old maxim, on which history has already given its verdict, which history has already condemned. It was the maxim of that philosophic morality of antiquity which has proved its own impotence. Originally, indeed, morality was combined with religion, even in the opinion of the ancient world. Little as Greek imagination shunned to attribute human passions and human crimes to the gods, it yet regarded them as the patrons and guardians of the moral duties and tasks of earthly life. For the gods were worldly powers, and therefore also the guardians of worldly life. Domestic life, civil life, cannot exist unless by keeping within the bounds prescribed by nature or circumstances. To observe these bounds is morality, arrogantly to despise them is sin, and the gods are the avengers of this sin of arrogance. It was the Doric mind especially which represented the feeling for order, restraint, and law, and perceived the symbol of these qualities in Apollo, the god of harmony. This characteristic was also exhibited by that practical wisdom of which the seven wise men of Greece, the moral instructors and lawgivers of their race, were esteemed the representatives. From this practical morality of the better kind of popular opinion arose the moral philosophy of the philosophers. All morality was comprised in the so-called four cardinal virtues: wisdom, justice, valour, and prudence. These virtues, however, refer only to the relations of one man to another in civil life. They do not necessarily involve the deeper religious element; but are merely placed under the patronage of the gods. Their connection with religion is this: morality is not made to grow out of religion; it does not thence derive its origin, but only its external

support. The two occupy entirely different spheres. Morality did not necessarily involve religion, and whatever amount of morality religion might have, this was no essential element of her composition, but held in fief of morality. But even this bond was next dissolved. It was Aristotle, that great master of ancient philosophy, who completed its dissolution. With Plato, morality still had a religious character. Life on earth was to be fashioned after the heavenly model of the Divine ideas. Aristotle denied the reality of these ideas. Hence our conduct has no relation to the supermundane, but only to this world in which we live. It is not determined by the ideas of another world, but arises from the reasonable nature of man himself. Conduct towards Deity is out of the question; for the Deity has no relation to us, but exists in continual self-contemplation beyond the world of action, and is of no importance with respect to the moral life. Thus morality is demanded not by religion, but by the reasonable nature of man. Now the nature of man finds its most appropriate manifestation in the state, and accordingly morality is merged in the relation to the state. It necessarily exhibits a political character. All morality, all sin, is of a political nature. Virtue is civil justice. This fundamental thought of the Aristotelian morality was the prevailing view of the Greek world in general. Aristotle does but give distinct expression to general opinion, and carry it out to its ultimate consequences. Thus religion and morality parted company. The outcome of the moral world was an immoral religion and an irreligious morality.

"The consequences, however, of this separation actually lie before us. History shows that such religion is obscured, that such morality is impotent. This result of history proves that the two, religion and morality, are assigned to each other, that their truth is only found in their union. The nobler spirits of the closing era of the ancient world felt this. The later stoical philosophy sought to found its morality on religion. The strong point of the Stoics is morality. In this eminent school all the better minded of the latter ages of the ancient world

took refuge. Stoicism had a wider range of vision than the earlier philosophies. It surpassed the idea of the state, which had formed the highest ideal of its predecessors, and even of a Plato, and enlarged this notion to the idea of human society in general. Its merit was to have struck out a path to the idea —so pregnant with the future—of universal manhood. The development of the Roman empire furthered and supported this idea. For the Roman empire was not merely a state, but apparently a union of the human race in general, apparently, for there was no real union, but only an extension of the restraints of the original state upon the ruins of the independence of other states and nations. Thus the Stoic idea of human society had no reality and no truth. It was a shadow of the future, but not as yet a present reality, and consequently no vital force. A universal love of mankind was indeed spoken of, but this was mere phraseology, for it was not only unrealized but meaningless. How void of meaning this notion was may be seen even in Cicero, who transplanted the Stoic morality into Roman soil. Deeper sources were needed for the new ethical acquisitions, and these were sought in religion; the later stoicism of Seneca, the contemporary of St. Paul, is characterized by its religious tinge, and tries to base morality upon religion. The severed streams now tend toward each other; and morality, having proved its own impotence, seeks to derive new strength from the spirit of religion. But for its attempt to succeed, Stoicism must have been in possession of true religion; and this it was without, for it was without the knowledge of the true, the personal God. Its opinions were pantheistic. Nature and its laws were supreme. The absorption of God in the world and the deification of the world, are fundamental ideas with heathenism; and it was this false view of religion, which prevailed in Stoicism, that frustrated its attempts in morality. They were but prophecies—yet still prophecies—whose fulfilment was as yet future."

It is a remarkable testimony to the insufficiency of the ethical basis on which it is attempted to build up a new theory

of human life, that those who make the attempt are constantly widening the basis, putting into it as much of religious principle and sentiment as they are able without absolute contradiction. "What shall we do to morality in order to turn it into religion? 'Touch it with emotion,' says Mr. Matthew Arnold, 'and fix its eye on the *stream of tendency*, as that continuous *not-ourselves* which makes for righteousness.' Mr. Frederick Harrison has no objection to the 'emotion,' but prefers, as a Supreme Being, the idea of *collective humanity*, which claims the individual's service, and weaves it into its texture for ever. The newest philosophy of Holland deems it enough that the morality shall be *ideal;* not the prosaic will of duty that toils under the burden and heat of the day, but the free flight towards visionary perfection to which midnight contemplation invites. Religion, we are assured, is *Moral Idealism.* In this definition the modern tendency finds its most exact expression."[1] But the following consideration of the effects of atheism, or of any denial of Theism, will suffice to confirm the justness of that aversion which has been almost universally felt by mankind to any attempts to remove the religious foundations of society, and which has been felt most powerfully when the standard of moral life has been the highest.

1. *The conscience of man requires both for its enlightenment and support the ideas and practice of religion.* Where there is no kind of worship, no fellowship on any higher ground than social instinct or common earthly pursuit, it is difficult to see how moral sentiment can be maintained. Morality sinks into a calculation of advantages, or into the still lower depth of pride—the worship of our own greatness in isolation from our fellows.

2. *The cultivation of the heart, which must ever be the seat of motive in the moral life, cannot be carried on without Theism.* Men may be æsthetically cultured, civilized, touched with sentiments of courtesy and gentleness, "sweetness and

[1] Martineau's "Ideal Substitutes for God," p. 8.

light," and so forth; but the great want of the human heart is an object of affection which, while lifting it to the highest thoughts, fills it with the most genuine emotion. In all merely human objects there is a mixture of good and evil. If love be the grandest principle of the emotional nature, then the love of God must be the only true and satisfying food of that nature. Atheism withers the affections of man, and turns his face downward like the brute.

3. *The education of the young on atheistic principles is an impossibility without the destruction of moral character.* To a large extent the rules which we give in education must be based on authority. We cannot trace them in every instance to a rational foundation; nor would it be convenient to attempt to do so in the process of instruction. The mind of the child is incapable of philosophy, and requires decision. Are we then to depend solely on the authority of one human being over another, or of society over the individual, or of custom and tradition and expediency? Surely we are in that case turning education into a perilous experiment. The authority may be contemned and resisted, and the whole edifice reared upon it fall into ruins. The only safe foundation of authority on which to place the injunctions and directions of education is that of the *deepest reverence*, an appeal to the inmost nature, a reference of the mind and heart and will to the supreme Source of truth, goodness, and commandment. God is teaching and ruling through His servant.

4. *The administration of justice cannot be maintained in an atheistic society.* Where there is no acknowledged standard of justice, no appeal from men's own ideas of law and right to an absolute law and right, what protection can there be against anarchy and disorder? True, a society can be imagined in which the majority were atheists, and still for a time agreed to maintain the execution of a moral code of laws. But such a society could not hold together. Individualism would assert itself. The absence of an absolute standard of justice in a revealed will of God would open the way to endless conflicts, and in the

end tyrannical power would usurp the place of right. The history of the French Revolution was a sharp lesson to humanity on the impossibility of maintaining justice without a reference to the will of God. Those who profess to uphold justice and to advocate morality, denying at the same time the necessity of religion, have no conception themselves what it would be to be shut up in their own atheism. They owe the very liberty they abuse to the religion they assault. Their position is a contradiction and anomaly, for they are continually employing terms which have no meaning unless there be a God. "There are men," says Ernest Naville,[1] "whose beliefs have all been destroyed, while their conscience, like a solitary pillar, stands upright among the ruins. The phenomenon presented by these virtuous persons fills us with reverence and wonder. They are, properly speaking, the miracles of that Divine Goodness whose name is never on their lips. If there is a man on earth who ought to fall on his knees and shed warm tears of gratitude, it is one of these who, while he means to deny God, has yet been endowed by Providence with so lively a feeling for the noble and the pure, with so strong an aversion for evil, that his sense of duty stands firm and upright without any other supports. An exception, however, is not the rule, and what falls to the lot of some does so to them but for a time, and never falls to the lot of others at all. There are crusts of snow over the fissures in the glaciers of the Swiss mountains. The hanging bridge bears on the traveller safely over the abyss, but the thin crust breaks beneath the steps of many, and the rash throng are hurled into the depths. So does it fare with those schools of philosophy from which the idea of God is banished, and with that culture in which a lively feeling of the existence of God is lost; they sink into those sunless regions which the light of the feeling for the good no longer penetrates."

5. *The general effect of a widespread atheism must be to sensualise mankind.* If there be no other antidote to material

[1] "Le Pere Celeste," p. 51.

influences and fleshly impulses than moral idealism, experience shows that the evil will speedily overwhelm the good. To live for this world is to be under the power of this world, and no vain talk of enthusiasm for humanity or idealising of human motive by regarding the individual as part of an organic whole, will avail against the actual temptations of a corrupt society, and a weak, not to say sinful, nature. A life which is based upon a mere philosophic figment is based upon the sand and easily thrown down. Theism is not only philosophically firm, but it is the solid foundation which was laid down by the immeasurable past in the thoughts and convictions of men, "so that they are without excuse."

PART III.

REVELATION.

CHAPTER I.

THE POSSIBILITY AND NECESSITY OF REVELATION.

THE subject of revelation requires to be cleared of some confusion before it is dealt with in connection with the Christian argument. The simplest meaning of the word is that of the discovery or manifestation of what was hidden, corresponding with the Greek φανέρωσις or ἀποκάλυψις. But the more definite meaning which has come to be attached to it is that of a superhuman or supernatural authority attached to certain special discoveries and communications of truth. The nature of the truth which is revealed is not capable of previous definition, therefore it is an unwarrantable objection to the idea of revelation, to represent it as a limitation of truth, by bringing down the absolute reality unknown, to the faculties of the knowing mind. Assuming that there is a personal God who is absolute Truth Himself, it is conceivable that He should reveal or make known, in ways which He deems best, so much of that infinite reality as is consistent with the nature and necessities of His creatures. *Revelation* does not mean the discovery of the absolute, or the unveiling of the infinite mystery of God, or the passing over of the Divine into the human. But it does mean a publication, manifestation, authorization, of so

much truth as corresponds with the moral and spiritual demands of man and the special purpose of a Divine redemption of man from sin to eternal life. There has always been acknowledged, both by those who opposed the Divine authority of Christianity and by Christian apologists, a *general* or *natural* revelation, in distinction from the special, positive, and authoritative revelation in the Scriptures. It is not disputed by any order of thinkers who admit the existence and agency of God in the world, that there is truth which may be called moral truth, and even religious truth, revealed, in the sense of being open to human discovery, in the physical laws of the universe, in the rational and moral constitution of man, in all that the human intellect can observe and analyze. We find allusions to such a revelation of Divine truth, which all can read, both in the writings of the prophets and apostles, and in those of the early fathers of the Church. (*Cf.* Ps. xix.; Acts xiv. 15, xvii. 24–26; Rom. i. 19; ii. 15, etc. Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen.) There must be in every embodiment of moral and spiritual truth, however we describe it, a certain portion which, to use the expression which has been employed by Bishop Butler, is a republication of the law of Nature or natural religion. It is not maintained in any view of revelation that such truth, which human faculties, generally assisted by Divine support, can discover, has been given to the world by any means which can be called superhuman or supernatural. But there are other truths, such as are not within the sphere of natural law or the scope of reason working according to its natural principles. And these truths, if they be presented to the mind of man at all, we can conceive as the matter of special revelation. For the purpose of providing a basis on which this conception of revelation can be securely fixed, it is requisite to define clearly what the questions are which have to be answered. In some sense there must be admitted a communication from the mind of God to the mind of man, and that communication must be regarded as special, extraordinary, capable of verification, and morally necessary. The following

questions, then, may be framed as containing the substance of the difficulties on the subject of revelation :—

I. *Is it possible, or conceivable,* that there should be such communication between the Infinite Being and individual men as revelation presupposes ?

II. Granting such revelation to be abstractly possible, is it *morally necessary,* cannot the wants of man be supplied by the teaching to be derived from Nature and from reason ?

III. Admitting both the possibility and moral necessity, *can such a revelation be given in such a manner* as to vindicate itself against *à priori* and *à posteriori* objections ?

We begin with *the possibility of revelation.*

I. Is it possible, or conceivable, that there should be such communication between the Infinite Being and individual men as revelation presupposes ? The answer to this question will vary according to the position assumed with respect to the metaphysical side of it. It must be admitted that every conception which can be formed of revelation as intercourse between the Infinite and the finite must be based upon a transcendental mystery. How it is possible that the Infinite can be manifested or declared in any way without ceasing to be Infinite, must remain a metaphysical perplexity absolutely insoluble to our minds. The pantheist insists upon the impossibility of revelation, because he takes it to mean a representation of the Infinite in the finite. But the difficulty which arrests the logical faculty need not stand in the way of thought, for it is the same antinomy of the reason, the same *apparent* contradiction which besets the mind of man in every attempt to transcend phenomena. Dr. Mansel has presented the difficulty in all its various aspects in his " Limits of Religious Thought." The best answer to make to such an objection on the threshold, is to set over against the metaphysical problem the universally admitted fact. If we are able to believe that there exists a personal God whose freedom must be inherent in His personality as infinite, then we are able to believe that that free personality can hold intercourse with His creatures.

But the metaphysical objection to revelation has been put in another form by pantheists from the time of Spinoza to that of Strauss. It has been urged that the passivity of the receiving mind is absolutely necessary to the truth of the revelation, as the perfect surface of a reflecting medium to the truth of the image reflected, a condition which cannot be fulfilled in the case of man. Revelation being given to man and through man, must partake of the human, must be in fact anthropomorphic. It is therefore the product of two factors, the Divine factor, the human factor. As such it is not, strictly speaking, a true reflection of the Divine, but is a mere symbolism. In this objection the nature of revelation is misunderstood. It is not the Divine becoming the human, or the Infinite copying itself off in terms of the finite, it is the personal God communicating to man so much of His truth as is required to attain the ends for which the revelation is given. He can convey truth to a finite mind only in such ways as are adapted to a finite comprehension. To allege against such a conception that it puts relative truth in the place of absolute truth, is futile, for the truth revealed is not represented as absolute truth, but as truth in its relation to the nature and wants of man. The Scriptures do not claim to be a perfect transcript of the Infinite, but a practical method of the education of man for the future. They are full of acknowledgments of human ignorance, insufficiency, and dependence.

Another form of substantially the same metaphysical objection, is that revelation to an individual involves the miraculous, and miracles are incredible. This can be no difficulty when the miraculous is not treated as *à priori* incredible. The assumption that man's knowledge of the laws of the cosmos is complete, must be put aside as both immoral and unphilosophical. It is not necessary to suppose that the method of revelation is a violation of any known laws, or indeed that it is against or apart from law at all. The action of the Divine Spirit upon the human spirit must remain in the very nature of things an insoluble mystery. To call it miraculous is not to

prove that it is irregular or arbitrary. This subject, however, must be reserved for fuller treatment when we deal with the facts involved in the production and transmission of the Scriptures. The difficulty can scarcely be met on abstract ground. A certain positive revelation has been received as Divine; looking at the facts of that revelation, are they or are they not credible? That is a question which we must at present postpone. To reason *à priori*,—a revelation is a miracle, all miracles are incredible, therefore a revelation is incredible,—is to bar the door against evidence with mere generalisations which cannot be proved. There is no occasion to dwell longer on the mere metaphysical difficulties, opposed rather to the logical definition of revelation than to the fact. We pass to the more tangible and plausible objection which is made on the ground of the sufficiency of cosmical law and the development of human reason. The question is asked—

II. Granting that revelation is abstractly possible, is *it morally necessary;* cannot the wants of man in his relation to the Divine Being be supplied by the teaching to be derived from Nature and from reason? Here we meet the Deist, the rationalist, the pantheistic sceptic, the school of intuitionists, and all those who, apart from the question of Theism, maintain that the knowledge of man is a self-evolving process for which we have to postulate nothing else than the working of natural law. Revelation, it has been said, presupposes the imperfection or disorder of natural reason. It involves, therefore, a contradiction. Reason is a Divine gift, but as being from God, it should require no supplementary aid from miraculous interposition. What can revelation do but appeal to that same natural reason whose deficiencies it is intended to supply? To this it may be replied, that the facts amply testify *the insufficiency of reason.* History and conscience justify revelation. But apart from such evidence of the insufficiency of natural reason, we may appeal to *analogy.* It is in perfect analogy with all the scheme of Nature and with the history of human progress that the faculties of man should be assisted. Such

assistance is in no contradiction with the simplest dictates of reason. Development itself is not an isolated fact, but implies a harmony and co-operation among the various principles which are at work in Nature. It remains to be proved that there is anything in revelation which violates natural order. It is quite as conceivable that human faculties should be created dependent upon stimulus and pabulum provided *ab extrâ*, as that they should be created with an internal power of development sufficient without such assistance. The analogy of the eye and light may be adduced. The organ may be complete in itself, and still require that the adjustment of the physical world around it should be adapted to its use. Revelation may be as truly necessitated by the laws of the universe as any other fact. The existence of a hidden virtue or potentiality does not dispense with the agency of an external cause which shall call it forth. It rather suggests and confirms it. Such is the law attested throughout Nature. "All effects," says Professor Rogers,[1] "are the results of properties or susceptibilities in one thing, solicited by external contact with those of others. The fire no doubt may smoulder in the dull and languid embers; it is when the external breeze sweeps over them, that they begin to sparkle and glow and vindicate the vital element they contain. The diamond in the mine has the same internal properties in the darkness as in the light; it is not till the sun shines upon it, that it flashes on the eye its splendour. Look at a flower of any particular species; we see that it is developed in connection with a variety of external influences; as it comes necessarily under the action of the sun, rain, dew, soil, it expands in a particular manner and in that only. It exhibits a certain configuration of parts, a certain form of leaf, a certain colour, fragrance, and no other. We do not doubt, on the one hand, that without the skyey influences these things would never have been; nor, on the other, that the flower assumes this form of development, and this alone, in virtue of its internal structure and organization. But both sets of conditions must conspire in

[1] "Eclipse of Faith," pp. 281–309, First Edition.

the result," etc. This analogy is strictly applicable to the development of the mind and of the moral nature. Education is dependent on the two factors, the nature within and the corresponding educing power brought to bear upon it from without. Evidently, therefore, if revelation be supposed to be a providential adaptation of facts to the development of human knowledge there is nothing in it which is not in perfect harmony with the process of natural law. But it has been objected again, that it is opposed to liberty. The free development of reason is restrained by a certain positive direction imparted to it by a supernatural process. But here, again, the idea of revelation is first falsified and then condemned. It is supposed to be a mere arbitrary, external authority to which man is summoned to bow. The true conception of revelation, however, is quite consistent with the true conception of liberty. It is itself an appeal to the free exercise of human faculties. There may be, certainly, in the revelation, truths which have their roots in that region of thought where reason must acknowledge itself incapable of exercising any critical research, but the same may be said of every department of human knowledge. The evidence of the revelation is not beyond the test of reason. The ambassador's credentials are distinct from his message. They are susceptible of examination, and can be certified as worthy of the utmost confidence. The message which is announced may in parts of it be mysterious and transcendental, but taken as a whole it appeals to both reason and the moral nature, and approves itself by internal evidence as harmonizing with the character of Him from whom it professes to have come. As to the authority of the revelation, that is, taken aright, no derogation of human freedom. It is partly the authority of truth itself appealing to man as truth, and partly the authority of facts, which, like all facts, are not capable of complete demonstration, but demand no other submission than a reasonable being ought to be prepared to yield and which he does yield in analogous instances without any loss of freedom, but rather with an assertion of his free right of judgment. This is very

ably illustrated in the essay by Professor Rogers,[1] "Reason and Faith;" see also Leibnitz, Introductory Essay to his Theodicée "On the Conformity of Faith to Reason."

But the question still remains, is there moral necessity for a revelation to which is attached special Divine authority? The Rationalist school, while varying in their methods, agree in the rejection of the fundamental conception of Scripture. They admit that there may be a providential process of moral and spiritual education by means of which the mind of man may be carried forward in the knowledge of God and of Divine truth, but they deny that it is necessary to suppose that in that process of "the education of the race" there has been anything more involved than the regular operation of law. The Bible is a reflection of facts which can be accounted for without the introduction of agencies beyond those always existing in the world. This was the position which was assumed by Lessing in Germany, and which has been virtually adopted by the more moderate rationalists of modern times generally. The "*word of God*" is taken to mean all Divine truth by whatever medium imparted to man, and the Scriptures are simply the documents of the Hebrew religion and of Christianity which contain a word of God superior to all others in fulness and explicitness, but not possessing any inherent authority to which reason is summoned to bow, beyond the authority of truth itself in so far as it is mingled with them. The Spirit of God would not be denied to the Scriptures, and as containing the results of the working of the Spirit of God in human consciousness they would be called inspired, but the Spirit of God would be ascribed to every true minded, devout reader of the Scriptures, who, as a seeker for the truth, has the vocation and the power to find and approve the message of God. Revelation, it is evident, in the view of this rationalistic school, describes a general fact, the providential education of the human race. It is not at all inconsistent with that general fact that there should be

[1] "Collected Essays from *Edinburgh Review*," vol. ii. pp. 250-388.

extraordinary communications of Divine truth through *extraordinary events and exceptional men;* and if such speciality be admitted, then the method by which it is introduced into the history of man cannot be *à priori* determined, must be learned by a careful inquiry into the history of revelation. The rationalist is compelled to acknowledge that God teaches man. He must go farther. The Divine education of man in the knowledge of the natural world, in the development of practical power, in the moral and (if the term be permitted) in the spiritual world, is largely by the instrumentality of extraordinary facts and extraordinary men. The genius of the man of science, the revolutions of the political life of nations, the crises and catastrophes of the world, are they not all as truly incomprehensible to us and divinely ordered, as the facts and words of Scripture? The objection, therefore, to revelation, amounts to nothing more than an objection to the theological doctrine of inspiration. We cannot fully meet it without an examination into the grounds upon which the authority of Scripture is rested, which will be considered in the sequel; we may, however, at this stage, deal with another preliminary objection to the Christian view of revelation which may be put aside without entering immediately into the question of the authority of Scripture. It may be admitted that a revelation is possible, and that if granted it would harmonize with the Divine method of promoting human development, but it may be asked—

III. Can a revelation be certified? Is it possible that it can be known to be a Divine revelation in a special sense? Can it be given to man in such a manner as to vindicate itself against *à priori* and *à posteriori* objections? The answer to this question may be divided into three parts. 1. The *method* of the revelation, by individual men, and by writings handed down from age to age, is not unreasonable. 2. The anterior probability of such a revelation as is given in Scripture is undoubtedly strong. 3. The test of time being applied to the revelation actually given sufficiently approves the Divine

authority which is claimed for it. Let us briefly unfold this vindication of the Divine method.

1. It is reasonable that if a revelation be given to man it should be given gradually, by progressive stages, in portions, through individual men, and by writings handed down from age to age. A book revelation, it has been alleged, can never certify itself. God must speak to man by "intuition," by the elevation of his consciousness, by manifestation to the inner eye. And what is thus revealed to an individual can never be more than indirectly and partially communicated to others. This view would never stand alone as an objection to Divine revelation. In the writings of such men as Theodore Parker of Boston (U. S.), and F. W. Newman and others of the Broad Church school in our own country, it is connected with a doctrine of absolute religion and intuitional religious faculty, which merely means the rejection of Christianity as a final form of religious truth, and the assertion of man's claim to evolve a perfect religion from the depths of his own nature and the laws of the cosmos. It is a pantheistic and mystical view which disappears more and more as the doctrine of the Divine Personality and the facts of Christianity are made the true basis of scriptural authority. The objection as expressed in the writings of Parker, Newman, Greg, and others, has been answered very fully by Professor Rogers, in his "Eclipse of Faith," and Appendix, to which we must refer the reader. It is now, however, of less importance to meet it in detail, as it has been overshadowed by the much darker opposition of the atheistic school. If a revelation is to be made at all, by what method can we suppose it made? By superhuman beings entirely? That would be to make too great a demand upon our faith. By fact or event alone? That would scarcely lift it above moral teaching, and would exclude the most important element in revelation, the verbal record of truths and promises. If it be a communication of Divine truth to the whole race, it is in perfect analogy with the rest of human history that portions of the race, and individuals, should be

made the media. The intellectual elevation of man has been chiefly through special intellectual power bestowed on the few and imparted to the many. The advance of the race has been through its exceptional peoples and men. If it be objected that a revelation to an individual cannot be proved Divine by any signs attached to the individual history, it may be answered that there is no such claim put forth on behalf of the Scripture writers. They are engrafted into a unity which must be regarded in its totality and not in its isolated parts. The whole course of revelation, with all its documents, must be viewed together, and as we shall see when we state the facts, the Bible as a whole vindicates itself, and stands on a basis broad enough to hold up its authority.

2. The anterior probability of a revelation, taken in connection with the fact that a revelation claiming to be Divine is before us, is a powerful argument against mere speculative objections to it *in limine*. A revelation is the demand of man's actual condition. He is morally impure, and the attempts which he has made to provide himself with religion, to supplement the teaching of Nature, have proved him incapable of self-elevation. There are certain elementary truths of morality and religion which Deists, like Lord Herbert of Cherbury, have systematised, but such deistical systems could not be made the basis of any practical method of worship or moral education. Indeed, to separate such elementary truths from the religious system with which they are vitally connected, is to deprive them of all value as a motive power. Bishop Butler has shown that a republication of natural religion is requisite, such as is furnished by Christianity, and he well observes that "it is certain no revelation would have been given had the light of Nature been sufficient in such a sense as to render one not wanting and useless." One of the methods employed by Deists to support their position has been to select favourable passages from heathen authors in order to show that as high a standard of moral perfection existed where there was no direct revelation as where Christianity taught

its peculiar doctrines. But it remains to be proved that such heathen teaching was entirely independent of direct revelation. And granting that it is due to the light of Nature alone, it is easy to set over against such exceptional instances the uncertainty and confusion of ancient systems of philosophy, the inadequacy of such sentiments to preserve the very men who proclaimed them from deep moral degradation, the general prevalence of superstition and moral helplessness in the heathen world, and the confessions of the greatest minds of antiquity, such as Pythagoras, Plato, Socrates, Seneca, Epictetus, M. Aurelius, that their teaching availed nothing against the corruption of the world, and that on the most important questions of man's destiny they were incapable of arriving at definite conclusions. "No man," says Butler,[1] "can think the light of Nature sufficient, in seriousness and simplicity of mind, who considers the state of religion in the heathen world before revelation, and its present state in those places which have borrowed no light from it; particularly the doubtfulness of some of the greatest men concerning things of the utmost importance, as well as the natural inattention and ignorance of mankind in general. It is impossible to say who would have been able to have reasoned out that whole system which we call Natural Religion, in its genuine simplicity, clear of superstition; but there is certainly no ground to affirm that the generality could. If they could, there is no sort of probability that they would. Admitting there were, they would still highly want a standing admonition to remind them of it and inculcate it upon them. And further still, were they as much disposed to attend to religion as the better sort of men are, yet even upon this supposition there would be various occasions for supernatural instruction and assistance, and the greatest advantages might be afforded by them."

Again, granting that there has always been a portion of the true light in the world and that men might avail themselves of it, and that Christianity as a revelation appeals to the natural

[1] "Anal." Pt. II. ch. i.

reason and conscience, there would still require to be instituted, as Butler has shown, an external support of that natural religion in a system of religious truth and worship. Without such support natural religion is apt to fade away in mere vain sentiments and instincts. Such a system of practical religion requires for its support a society founded upon a positive, special revelation. Rationalists have felt the force of this view so much that they have made attempts to institute a rationalistic church, which, however, has proved, and must prove, an utter failure. The analogy of the state growing out of the root of natural justice is altogether false; for the state itself, as matter of fact, has rested on religious sanctions, and simply embodies the degree of knowledge and the ideas of justice prevalent in the age and people in which it exists. It is the result and not the cause of human progress. Rationalism cannot secure even agreement and confidence, on rational grounds alone. Kant has shown that the speculative reason fails to provide a basis on which any true edifice of knowledge can be built up. "The abnormal results of the modern school of philosophy," says Kahn, "from the time of Fichte, the prevailing tendency of the times towards Pantheism, Materialism, Nihilism (Pessimism), which the rationalist cannot overcome when he gives himself up to the guidance of mere natural reason, must clearly show that the changeable knowledge of mankind is a very unstable foundation for the unchangeable religious necessities of man to rest upon."

The positive evidence of the need of a Divine revelation has been set forth very fully by Augustine in his great work, "The City of God," in which he shows that the representation of the condition of man given in Scripture corresponds with the testimony of history and conscience. The substance of his arguments may be put in a general form thus:—1. The existence of a religious nature in man presupposes the provision of that which meets the requirements of such a nature. 2. The testimony of the human heart is to the need of external help to answer its deepest questions. 3. Men have always been

ready to receive revelations of whatever kind, showing that they have expected them to be given. 4. It does not satisfy our idea of religion that it should be one-sided, simply an active expression of feeling towards the Divine Being; we must depend upon His expression of Himself towards us, for the essence of religious life is not worship but communion with God. In all religions there has been an element of contemplation, that is, an element corresponding with an attitude of receptivity, as well as an element of active service. The eastern religions, which are certainly the most ancient, contain this element the most conspicuously. The passive predominates over the active. God spake to men first before men spake to God. 5. The particular revelation given us in the Bible has proved itself adequate to meet the moral and spiritual wants of mankind through many ages.

As to the natural expectation of a revelation, Dr. Newman, in his "Grammar of Assent," pp. 417–18, shows that it is a powerful confirmation of the facts of positive religion. "One of the most important effects of natural religion on the mind in preparation for revealed religion is the anticipation which it creates that a revelation will be given. That earnest desire of it which religious minds cherish, leads the way to the expectation of it. Those who know nothing of the wounds of the soul are not led to deal with the question, or to consider its circumstances; but when our attention is roused, then, the more steadily we dwell upon it, the more probable does it seem that a revelation has been or will be given to us. This presentiment is founded on our sense, on the one hand, of the infinite goodness of God, and on the other, of our own extreme misery and need—two doctrines which are the primary constituents of natural religion. It is difficult to put a limit to the legitimate force of this antecedent probability. Some minds will feel it so powerfully as to recognise in it almost a proof, without direct evidence, of the divinity of a religion claiming to be true, supposing its history and doctrine are free from positive objection, and there be no rival religion with plausible claims of its own. Very little

positive evidence seems to be necessary when the mind is penetrated by this strong anticipation. It was this instinctive apprehension, as we may conjecture, which carried on Dionysius and Damaris at Athens to a belief in Christianity, though St. Paul did no miracle there, and only asserted the doctrines of the Divine Unity, the resurrection, and the universal judgment; while, on the other hand, it had no tendency to attach them to any of the mythological systems in which the place abounded." May we not add to this reasoning the consideration that the readiness with which Christianity was welcomed by the multitudes of the ancient world was due not simply and entirely to their weariness of the old pagan systems and their bondage, but still more to the fact that the revelations of Christianity appealed, in a manner and with a power which no other religion could rival, to the inwrought expectation that a revelation would be given, and at the same time met and supplied the spiritual wants from which that expectation arose, and by which it was kept alive.[1]

It has been maintained by the school of positivists and secularists that there is no demand in the nature and state of man for a revelation, because the cosmical laws of development provide for the gradual extinction of evil, and the moral world being admitted to be above the mere physical world, all that we require is to adjust the facts to that recognised order. There are many who, without positively denying that there is a personal God and that the universe is under His government, refuse to acknowledge the necessity of passing in thought beyond the phenomena of man's existence on the earth, and for the maintenance and happiness of that existence they see nothing more required than the supply of present wants and the preservation of social order. They cannot ignore the laws of the moral world, they cannot disconnect those laws from the nature of man, but they believe that there is a self-regulating principle in the universe which precludes the

[1] See also Calvin: "Institutes," Bk. I. ch. vi.; Conder: "Basis of Faith," Lect. vii. § 2.

necessity of any special interposition on the part of the Divine Being, or any special communications of truth beyond what man can discover by the unrestrained exercise of his faculties. But apart from the purely abstract, speculative character of such a view, which it would be impossible to sustain in harmony with the theistic position at all, and therefore may be regarded as equivalent to a positive denial of the existence of God and met by the arguments for Theism, it is directly contrary to fact that man is in his best state where he is without a revelation, or that he can develop his moral nature and preserve the well-being of society apart from the teachings of religion. The testimony of history and of universal observation is that human beings are sufferers, and that their sufferings are connected with their moral nature. It is the law to which man naturally and instinctively responds. True, the mere fact that there is suffering in the world is no proof that these sufferings are retributory. But the fact that suffering and wrong are connected together, and happiness and right, points to a moral order reflected in the consciousness of men and maintained in the world. If a musician, hearing discordant sounds, is conscious of discomfort and cries out against the offence given to his ears, that fact of his protest proves that there is music in him and the want of music in the sounds about him. If he had "no music in his soul," he could feel no wrong done to his ears, and if there were no positive manifestation of external evil, there would be no protest against it. Now the facts of the world point not merely to a negative imperfection but to a positive violation of law. The explanation which lies at the foundation of revelation cannot at all events be proved to be contradicted by the facts; whereas to assume the perfectibility of man, and to deny the reality of moral evil, is to leave a thousand things unexplained and to run counter to the inmost consciousness of man. The cry which has gone up from the heart of humanity everywhere is a confession of sin and a longing after peace with God. The philosopher may ascribe the religious history of mankind if he pleases to ignorance and delusion, but he

cannot deny that the first, the simplest, the least sophisticated testimony of the human being, is to the necessity of reconciliation with God.

Here we may quote the admissions of Mr. J. S. Mill, who lays the greatest stress in his opposition to revelation on the difficulty of proving it *à posteriori*, granting that if the existence of God be allowed, the antecedent probability in favour of His holding communication with His creatures is irresistible. "The very imperfections of the evidences which natural theology can produce of the Divine attributes, remove some of the chief stumbling-blocks to the belief of a revelation. The argument of Butler's "Analogy" is, from its point of view, conclusive; the Christian religion is open to no objections, either moral or intellectual, which do not apply at least equally to the common theory of Deism. On the hypothesis of a God who made the world, and in making it had regard, however that regard may have been limited by other considerations, to the happiness of His sentient creatures, there is no antecedent improbability in the supposition that His concern for their good would continue, and that He might once or oftener give proof of it by communicating to them some knowledge of Himself beyond what they were able to make out by their own unassisted faculties, and some knowledge and precepts useful for guiding them through the difficulties of life. The only question to be entertained, and which we cannot dispense ourselves from entertaining, is that of evidence. Can any evidence suffice to prove a Divine revelation?" We can scarcely expect the sceptical mind to admit more than this. Mr. Mill's great objection to the argument for a revelation from the goodness of God, is that we cannot reconcile the existence of evil at all with that goodness; but this is to make the impotence of man's intellect to solve the problem of the universe a reason for rejecting the natural inferences from the manifestations of the Divine character. That God is benevolent is proved by a multitude of facts. If He exists, He must be good, for it is impossible to conceive the universe as resting upon omnipotent

evil, and the theory of two antagonistic powers at the head of all things is simply contradictory and absurd. If, then, God be infinitely good, it is much more rational to suppose that the mystery of evil in the universe is insoluble because our faculties are unequal to the solution, than that, if understood, it would be found inconsistent with the benevolence of the Creator. Admitting, then, the goodness of God, a revelation is not only possible but antecedently probable. The testimony of all mankind is to the insufficiency of natural light, and the darkness of the world calls for Divine help—it is a gloomy night, a deep wretchedness, an insupportable void and hunger after better things. "If God is good, revelation is probable. It is inconceivable that the Parent Mind, if loving men as His offspring and desiring their welfare, should withhold from them that knowledge which must be the noblest, the most desirable, and the most useful,—the knowledge of Himself." [1]

[1] Conder.

CHAPTER II.

POSITIVE REVELATION, OR THE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURE RECORD GENERALLY STATED.

WE have now prepared the way for the more special view of revelation which lies at the foundation of Christianity. If revelation is possible, is morally necessary, and is capable of being proved matter of fact, we have come face to face with the question, Is there in existence anything which fulfils the idea of a positive, specific, credible revelation, so given to the world that it can be regarded as divinely authorized? Now, admitting the *à priori* possibility and probability of a revelation, we must be fortified in the study of the *à posteriori* argument, which claims to prove that the Scriptures actually before us are a Divine revelation, by a preliminary exposition of the general principles of method on which the argument rests. These principles we will now briefly state :—

I. A special or positive revelation will be given through individuals, by portions and stages, and in manifold ways, while at the same time certified by a *unity* which combines all portions into a whole.

II. A revelation *in Scriptures* handed down from one generation to another is both antecedently probable and capable of a certification *morally sufficient.*

III. In the case of the Old and New Testaments, there is nothing in their contents, generally regarded, which, *primâ facie*, is contradicted by any other part of the Divine government, or by the facts of the world. Specific objections to Scripture statements must be here excluded as irrelevant to the argument, and more matters of interpretation and criticism than of

apologetics. There are certain doctrines, such as are based upon the facts of sin and redemption, which are undoubtedly beyond the teaching of natural religion, and may be said to be the distinguishing features of the Scripture revelation; if they are not *contradictory* to the facts and laws of the universe, as discoverable by reason, then they present no insuperable obstacle to the reception of the revelation.

I. The first and most distinctive characteristic of a special or positive revelation must be its communication by a mediate and progressive method, through individuals, in portions, by stages, yet in unity. Admitting that there is a Divine purpose to communicate truth in a specific form, and beyond that which is discoverable by the ordinary faculties of man, it seems antecedently probable that individual men should be made the media. We can conceive only three methods as possible. 1. God might send an angel or superhuman being as His messenger, who by an extraordinary proclamation of truth should make it known to the world. 2. He might indite a revelation by a miraculous instrumentality, putting it forth like a sign in the heavens, giving it as a totally abnormal and superhuman product. But these two methods it is difficult to imagine as applying to the whole of revelation. If employed in particular instances, and for the communication of some portion of truth, they would involve, for the whole, so stupendous a miracle, or series of stupendous miracles, and would present them so much apart from the ordinary methods of Divine intercourse with men, that the strain upon human faith would be too great. Such methods may be mingled with others, but can scarcely suffice alone. 3. There remains, therefore, a third conception: without excluding the employment of superhuman beings and miraculous organs, there may be a selection of *human media* to whom, in some way, the special revelation shall be imparted, and who shall be so placed in relation to one another, and so assured, by special signs and communications, of their functions, that they shall claim to be the divinely appointed channels of revealed truth. This, of course, is a position which has to be

certified by evidence ; but it is *à priori possible*, and looking at other possible methods, it is *à priori probable.* The principle which is here premised, that of revelation to individual men, violates no general law of human consciousness, nor does it involve any such exceptional view of the relation between God and man as is altogether out of analogy with the acknowledged facts of the Divine government and the history of the world. To a large extent it may be said of the revelations of science and philosophy, that they are made through the selection and elevation of individual minds and lives. The faculties can be specially elevated, or gradually enlarged, so that the scope of the individual is very much wider than that of his fellow-men. The progress of human knowledge is carried forward through individuals, although not through individuals isolated from the world. It is a secondary question how, in what manner, the individual is fitted for his functions. In the case of Divine revelation there is more than the elevated consciousness; there is the special character and representative position of the individual ; there are attesting signs as well as inward conviction of Divine appointment ; and there is the approval of the revelation by those to whom it is sent. It is quite true that an individual may believe himself to be an organ of the Spirit of God when he is not, but it is no unreasonable view, *apart from direct external evidence*, that if one who claims to be received as a messenger of God attests his message by signs and wonders, holds a true relation to those who have gone before him in the succession of such messengers, and beyond that, having delivered his message is welcomed and received by the body of faithful men around him and after him, he is a medium of a special Divine revelation. The Bible, as a collection of such revelations given through individual men, must, of course, be subject to the test of reason and the religious consciousness to which it appeals, in so far as the general character of its contents is concerned. No revelation could be received which contradicted the laws of thought, the facts of the universe, the dictates of natural

religion; but if there be nothing which the reason of man and his religious nature absolutely rejects (which is a question of detail into which it is not necessary to enter at this point of the argument), then that the revelation should be given in the way in which it is alleged to have been given, is not inconsistent with its Divine authority. That there is a marvellous unity in the collection of Scriptures extending over two thousand years, has been observed by many, and is a strong confirmation of the authority of each individual portion. But it may be granted that the perception of that unity is to some extent the product of the Bible, and it will vary in those who read it according to their appreciation of its spirit. But on the surface of the record there is a line of fact in relation to which all the writings are disposed. That can scarcely be denied. If, then, there is a harmony between the words of the writers and the working of Divine providence, how is it possible to explain that harmony except on the principle of a Divine selection of the men and a special endowment of their minds and hearts for the work they did in writing the Scriptures? This argument is fully considered in the eloquent volume by Prof. Rogers on "The Superhuman Origin of the Bible Proved from Itself," especially Lectures VIII. and IX., "On the Exceptional Position of the Bible in the World," and "On certain Analogies between the Bible and 'the Constitution and Course of Nature.'" It is not necessary to dwell longer on the principle of method. The writings claim to be individually tried and proved as having a Divine authority; all that we here maintain is, that they cannot be rejected on the *à priori* ground that such a method of revelation through individuals and by progressive stages is improbable.

II. Revelation by means of Scriptures, preserved by tradition, laid up in a book, is both antecedently probable and capable of being certified with a degree of evidence morally sufficient. The Deist, and the modern intuitional school (which upholds the theory of a religious faculty in man, rendering revelation unnecessary because its own self-development

involves all that revelation supplies,) oppose a written revelation chiefly on two grounds: 1. That it reflects upon the perfection of the order of Nature to suppose that special communications should be sent to individuals and embodied in writings which have authority above all other writings. 2. That admitting the possibility of such revelation, it cannot be certified on any but miraculous grounds. We must postpone the question of miracles to another place. Here it is only requisite to show that there is nothing improbable, but the reverse, in the method of revelation which is exemplified in the Old and New Testaments. A written revelation does not exclude the use of natural faculties, whether we call them religious faculties, intuition, or by any other name whatever, rather it appeals to such faculties for confirmation. It does not suppress or override the evidence of a general revelation from God to man, the intercourse of the Divine Spirit with the human spirit all along the ages; the revelation which is embodied in a book corresponds with and is attested by the revelation of fact and providence. If the objection to a book revelation is a protest against the doctrine of verbal inspiration, that of course must leave the field open to the defenders of the Bible to maintain its authority without being committed to any such theory of inspiration, which we shall see hereafter they are able to do. If the argument is against an infallible book, but not against a Divine revelation by means of a book, then it must be clearly understood that it is not the infallibility of the writings which is maintained, but simply the Divine authority and sufficiency of the revelation. The possibility of a revelation being assumed, it is unreasonable to object to its being communicated to individuals, and if it be given to mankind through individual men, then analogy would suggest that it be handed down from one generation to another by means of writing. The gradual development of the revelation, the harmony of the history of its communication with the history of the world, the fact that Divine teaching is no exception to the rule of all teaching, for all knowledge and advancement is

mediated through special instruments and preserved by records and documents, all lend probability to the claim which is made on behalf of the sacred writings. "The development of the race, its advancement in knowledge and civilization, depends on garnering up the experience of the past and making it available for the future. Without that, each man, each generation, is but a disjointed link. Apart from some methods of conserving experience, there can be in fact no history; and accordingly of many ages and nations there is none. Until, therefore, men can *secure and hand down* the treasures of knowledge, there can be no progress. Till that be done, the world is in perpetual nonage. Consequently all advance, all civilization, waits on the discovery and application of an alphabet. Mechanical as it seems, pen and ink, or some equivalent, is the moving power of the world; the *sine quâ non* without which it would be at an eternal standstill, or rather would be ever learning and never coming to a stable knowledge of the truth. All the acquisitions of each generation would be but as 'water spilt on the ground' or poured into a sieve. It is therefore in precise analogy that this revelation, if it be a revelation indeed, has taken the form for which so many have presumed to deride it, the form of a 'book,' where all the successive communications it makes are durably registered." [1]

Nor is it any difficulty or objection that being in the form of a book it should be yet so given as to leave room for the trial of our faith and for the responsible use of our faculties. It is not sent to dispense with individual effort and communication with God, but to encourage, guide, and uphold them. That the revelation should exact profound study, investigation, and reflection, is to make provision for the moral and intellectual discipline of men, to exercise the virtues of patience, self-distrust, industry, perseverance, and humility. If there are difficulties in the revelation, even though they be admitted to be in some instances insoluble, though there be apparent discrepancies and errors in the written record, still

[1] Rogers.

that is no objection to the method. If it be granted that a revelation can be given through the medium of a succession of writers, then it is to be expected that there will be something in the form of it which is to be attributed rather to the *mediating process* than to the inspiring Spirit. We cannot conjecture any method of communication which should at the same time preserve the liberty of the messengers and impart the Divine message, and yet should not admit some degree of human fallibility. There are no real mistakes in Nature, but there are many in man's interpretation of Nature. There is nothing, we may presume, which is objectively a wrong presentment in the Bible, but yet there may be idiosyncrasies of the writers which mingle with the language in which they address us, but which at the same time do not hinder their being true reflecting media of the heavenly light. No candid mind accepting the possibility of revelation, can reject the idea of a written revelation. The facts which attend the particular realization of that idea in the Bible must be dealt with on their own merits, and will not be found inconsistent with the idea of a revelation gradually bestowed.

The distinction is sometimes drawn, and especially by the rationalistic school of thinkers, between the word of God *in* the Bible and the Bible as the word of God. If all that is meant by this distinction is to separate between the Divine purpose of revelation as a whole and the particular medium of it in the sacred book, it would be sound and just. There are other channels and instrumentalities by which the Divine mind communicates with mankind besides the written records. If, again, it be meant merely to protest against the extreme theory of a literal, mechanical dictation of words to men, the distinction would be valuable. But the real intention of those who insist upon the distinction is to exalt the critical faculty of man as against the authority of Scripture. The word of God is regarded as contained in the sacred writings, only in a mingled and imperfect manner. The truth is to be extracted from the miscellaneous mass as the philosophical historian extracts the truth of history from a

number of documents placed before him varying in credibility and value. Thus the critical and synthetical faculty of man is exalted above the Scriptures, and the true revelation is to the readers of the Bible not to its writers. "The usual Christian advocate," says Dr. Martineau, defending the position of Theodore Parker which is similar to that just described, "has rashly undertaken to prove, not *one positive fact*, a revelation of Divine truth in Galilee, but an *infinite negative*, no inspiration anywhere else." The school thus represented deny two things. 1. That this is the only theophany. 2. That this is theophany alone; that is, they look for *some* Divine elements elsewhere, and they look for *some* human here." But the Christian advocate does not deny the existence of Divine elements elsewhere than in the Bible, nor does he deny the existence of some human elements mingled with the Divine in the sacred writings. He simply demurs to the employment of the terms theophany, inspiration, word of God, in a loose manner to any merely scattered rays of truth and any dim and imperfect manifestations of God sent out in the world at large. The theophany of Christ is as far above all other theophanies as the sun is above the stars. It is complete in itself. It is adequate to human wants. It is connected with a perfectly unique historical development. The word of God may be rightly identified with the Bible in this sense, that we possess in that series of sacred books, extending over many centuries, a continuous and progressive revelation, which in its unity and in its character is entirely separate from all others, which is supreme in its completeness and in its glorious effects upon the human spirit, so that while we may say in regard to all other methods of revelation that God has borne witness to His truth in various times and places and by various agencies over the world, yet in the Bible He has unveiled the mystery of His will and declared His truth as the salvation of men. The actual worth of the revelation, however, is a matter for direct proof, and we may safely leave it to be certified by the course of time and the testimony of universal human experience.

III. The last preliminary principle which must precede an examination of the evidence for the Old and New Testaments is the general *primâ facie* accordance of their contents with the revelations of truth in the world and in the constitution of man. No amount of evidence could prove a revelation to be Divine, which either contradicted the laws of thought or the dictates of moral truth. But there are certain distinctive features of the Bible, which are on the very face of it, which we may examine beforehand, without any prejudice to our position as appealed to by the revelation to accept its authority. We carry with us a presumption in its favour, when we advance to the study of its evidences, if we find that its main features are in accordance with the facts of man's condition, adapted to supply his wants and in no wise contradictory to his reason. This is the substance of Butler's reasoning in the second part of his Analogy. Christianity is a revelation of things not discernible by reason, viz., the Father, Son, and Spirit engaged in a work for the redemption of mankind. It is a scheme or constitution imperfectly comprehended (chap. iv.). The particular system of mediation and redemption by means of a Mediator is in analogy with the course of life and the constitution of Nature (chap. v.). Admitting that there is a moral government of God in the world, which of course is the foundation on which we build our faith in revelation, it is evident that that moral government is administered through instruments or agents. God does not appear Himself personally to reward and punish; but there is a system of things, regulated by laws and a personal ministry, by which the will of God, regarded as the source of right, is executed. Plainly, then, there is nothing inconceivable, as against the analogy of Nature, in the appointment of a personal Redeemer, as the embodiment of the Divine Righteousness in Himself, the representative of God.

The fact to which Butler refers, that the moral government of God does seem to suggest the possibility of redemption, both by the insufficiency of moral changes to rectify the result of sin, and by the compassion which is mingled with the course

of things on earth, is of great importance. The whole scheme of human existence seems to be arranged with a view to results beyond the fulfilment of the moral law. We are pointed to a future state as necessary to complete the Divine purposes, and to that which is higher than the moral world as implied in the Mercy continually pleading with Justice. Both fear and hope are suggested by Nature. Revelation takes that imperfect suggestion of Nature and brings it to light in the gospel. The idea of a Divine interposition, through a Mediator, on behalf of man, is rejected in modern times, chiefly by the Pantheistic school, which would reduce all phenomena under the one universal law of development or evolution. And yet there is nothing inconsistent with the conception of progress in such interposition rightly regarded. As long as we face the fundamental phenomena of the moral consciousness, we must be prepared for facts which correspond with those phenomena. It remains to be shown by the pantheistic or scientific objector to revelation that the character and work of Jesus Christ is a contradiction of the laws of development. Who shall say that there may not be unfolded in the course of time a philosophy of redemption which shall harmonize with a true philosophy of the material universe? That a Divine Mediator should appear in the progress of things is no more against the analogy of Nature than that man himself should appear. What we denominate a miraculous Divine interposition may be found to be a fact involved in the laws of the universe. The theories of the positivist do not by any means cover the phenomena. We see only part of the ways of God. We must confess our ignorance, and in the spirit of true philosophy accept undoubted facts, waiting for light to reconcile them in any system of thought which we are capable of forming. No objection to revelation can be of any weight which is based on an unproved theory of the universe. If the truths of revelation prove themselves practically good; if human beings find in them the comfort they require; if they meet the demands of the moral and spiritual nature; if the

heart, which, as Pascal says, has reasons which the reason cannot comprehend, rejoices in them, then they cannot be rejected *à priori* because they are irreconcilable with philosophical views which are formed on a knowledge of the universe admittedly imperfect. "The doctrine of a Mediator between God and man," says Butler, "against which it is objected that the expediency of some things in it is not understood, relates only to what was done on God's part in the appointment, and on the Mediator's in the execution of it. For what is required of us in consequence of this gracious dispensation is another subject on which none can complain for want of information. The constitution of the world, and God's natural government over it, is all mystery as much as the Christian dispensation. Yet under the first He has given men all things pertaining to life; and under the other all things pertaining to godliness." [1]

We must not only be prepared to show that Christianity is a contradiction of reason before we reject it *à priori*, but we must be able to show that Nature can do without it. "If," says Dr. Bushnell, "there be only Nature with her constant quantities and endlessly propagated causes, if there be no Divine, supernatural Agency in this world, then there is no conceivable footing of society or social relationship with God left us." There is no middle term between atheism and Christianity. Either the revelation which we have in our hands is no revelation, and in that case we are without a key to the mysteries of the universe, or it is the supreme authority of God to which we must bow. The history of the world leads up to Christ. When the Mediator appeared, He closed one period in human affairs and opened another. The forces which were set in operation at and by the coming of Christ have been developing a new world since. Christianity cannot be inconsistent with human reason, nor irreconcilable with the course of Nature, for it plainly roots itself more and more firmly in the world as time goes on.

[1] Pt. II. chap. v.

Nor is there any power, be it philosophical, political, scientific, which presents anything like the same appearance of practical efficiency, anything like the same counteractive principles to the disintegrating process of moral evil and physical disorder in the world. A religion whose main feature is redemption is called for by the physical and moral helplessness of man. Christianity, or the religion of the Old and New Testament Scriptures, by its general character and manifest results, has a *primâ facie* claim to be received as a Divine revelation.

CHAPTER III.

BRIEF STATEMENT OF THE ARGUMENT FOR THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE, WITH DEFINITION OF TERMS EMPLOYED.

WE have now cleared the way for what may be called the *à posteriori* argument for the authority of the positive, special revelation contained in the Scripture record. The present chapter, however, will contribute to the clearness and effectiveness of what follows. We propose to describe the method which it is intended to pursue in the argument, and to remove, so far as possible, any ambiguity which may gather, which is apt to gather, about the terms which will be employed, an ambiguity particularly injurious when we deal with those aspects of revelation in which it presents to us facts not explicable on the ordinary basis of natural law.

The evidences of the Christian religion may be broadly divided into *internal evidences and external evidences.* By *internal evidences* are meant those which are derived from within the revelation itself, from the nature of its contents, regarded as approving themselves to be divinely given. We may take the constituents of Christianity, its leading facts, its distinctive principles, its main doctrines, and show that they are what they claim to be, from God and of God. In this case we are appealing to the rational and moral consciousness of man to admit the Divine authority of what is put before us in the Bible. But there is another kind of evidence which, while it does not exclude the consideration of the contents of the Scriptures, lays the chief stress on the facts connected with their communication to the world and their preservation as ancient documents. It may be argued that the history of

Christianity leads us up to these writings as the source whence the continuous stream of Christian fact has issued; that the genuineness and authenticity of the books of Scripture can be proved, with a large amount of evidence, satisfactory to the candid student; that the testimony both of the heathen world and of the Christian Church confirms the Divine authority of the writings; that the long trial of Christianity in the course of eighteen centuries, notwithstanding many chequered scenes and perplexing difficulties in that course of time, has approved it as of Divine origin and supremely adapted to the wants of man. In such an argument we are dealing with what may be called *external evidence*, not ignoring the character of the religion, but looking mainly to the facts of its history, both as a revelation and as a spiritual force in the world. It is not possible entirely to separate the internal evidence and the external evidence. When we are reasoning on the facts described in the Bible, we must necessarily call in the witnesses to the facts, and therefore must look beyond the bare statements of the record. When we are putting together the external evidences—proving the authority of the books, appealing to the witness of history—we ought not to lose sight of the great reality itself, the Divine fact, the revelation of God in Christ, reflected in the testimony of Christian men and Christian life. It is not our intention to treat these two departments of Christian evidence as distinct, but rather to break up the argument as a whole into *convenient portions;* thus the general effect of the successive descriptions of evidences may be reviewed, and the Christian advocate may confidently rest in the result.

The central fact of Christianity is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. The first and perhaps the most convincing argument is that which may be drawn from the Person and character of Jesus Christ, about whose actual existence there can be no discussion, and whose history as set forth in the Gospels may be assumed to be faithfully narrated. The claim of the Gospels is, however, intimately bound up with a belief

in miracles and the inspiration of the word of God. It will therefore be necessary to connect with the argument for the Divine character of the Lord Jesus Christ a vindication of the miraculous elements in Scripture, and a clear statement of the special authority which is attached to the inspired writings.

The next argument is that from *Prophecy.* Taking the prophetic writings as a whole, and the individual prophecies in the pages of the Bible, it can be shown that there was a Divine foresight of events, and communication of that foresight to prophets, and that there is a general correspondence between the words of Scripture and the history of the world which can be explained only on the principle of a Divine revelation.

We then pass on to *the History of Christianity* as showing that its origin must have been what is set forth in the New Testament, the argument which is identified chiefly with the name of Paley, and which, however imperfectly wrought out by him, has never been overthrown.

Closely connected with the purely historical argument is that from *the adaptation of Christianity to the nature of man* which is seen in the development of the Christian Church and the gradual but constantly progressive subjugation of the world under Christian influence.

Lastly, taking the Old and New Testaments as the embodiment of a Divine revelation, we shall review the argument for their canonical authority, the historico-critical argument, which has been sifted with immense learning in modern times, and which requires to be placed upon a somewhat modified basis.

It only remains in this chapter that we prepare the way for what follows with a few remarks on some of the terms which will be frequently employed in the course of the argument, and which may be liable to some ambiguity.

1. *Nature, natural, supernatural.* It has been pointed out by Mr. J. S. Mill, in his acute and philosophical essay on "Nature," that this word is capable of being understood in several senses, and has been the source of much confusion in writings both scientific and didactic. It may be taken to de-

note simply the complex whole of phenomena, including both what actually is and what potentially exists; *i.e.*, is included in existing powers and forces acting under laws and supposed to be capable of producing effects in the future as in the past. Or it may denote what is conceived as the ideal universe, what ought to be, what is involved in the original constitution of things; as we say, such and such is according to Nature, that Nature is to be followed, that a course of conduct is against Nature, and so forth. It will be evident that this latter sense of "Nature" is not strictly scientific. We cannot formulate our conceptions of the original order of the universe. We observe phenomena, reduce them to laws which express observed uniformities, systematize those uniformities, connect them together by the laws of our thought into what we call the order of Nature. But our reason being itself limited and incapable of transcending phenomena, and our powers of observation being necessarily progressive, and always falling short of the perfect knowledge of the universe, we can only mean by Nature the phenomena of the universe as presented to human thought. The whole body of scientific generalisations is a finite result. The universe is infinite. If, therefore, certain facts are before us which cannot be assigned to any recognised place in the order of Nature, it cannot be philosophically concluded that they are not facts, or that they are incredible, or that they are absolutely inconsistent with observed laws of Nature, or that they are violations of observed order. We can only say in regard to them that they are either the manifestation of forces or laws not yet discovered, or that they are examples of known forces or laws exceptional in their character, or that they are signs and evidences of the existence and action of some one Power, or Being, or system of powers and beings, not capable of being included in the order of natural existences. When we say of an event that it is *supernatural*, as distinguished from *natural*, we are using either a *negative* description or a *positive*, according to the idea which is predominant in the mind. We may mean by a supernatural event or fact merely a negation of natural causes, without

further definition of the cause to which it is to be attributed. A dead man is raised to life. We call that event *supernatural.* We mean, not that there is an arbitrary exercise of will without the medium of intervening instrumentality by which the will produces the result willed, but that the event does not transpire through the ordinary physical laws of corporeity and animation. It is supernatural because it is not in the sphere of those laws of life and death which are observed and formulated by man. But when we use the word *supernatural* we may include in it the conception of an order of existences and agencies which are beyond the sphere of human observation. It is impossible for us to deny that events do occur of which we can give no physical explanation. The mystery of life itself is impenetrable to us. The laws and forces of matter do not suffice to account for all that we are compelled to believe exists. Why may we not, therefore, connect with the word supernatural the *positive* conception of a sphere of existences and agencies, equally real with those which we observe, but at present only manifesting themselves by the effects which we cannot bring under any natural law? It is proposed by some that the word *superhuman* be employed instead of the word *supernatural.* If this be allowed, the special sense must be affixed to the word *human* of human knowledge or observation; but that introduces some confusion. That which can be included in the region of human *thought* is not strictly superhuman. If it is meant that man cannot understand it, neither can he understand material things, and in this sense all is superhuman. We cannot do better than retain the word *supernatural*, with the distinct postulate that by the word it is intended, not to exclude the idea of harmony with the order of the universe, not to designate that which is unrelated to Nature, or arbitrary, or purposeless, or anomalous, but simply that which cannot be assigned to any cause or law which human reason has discovered in the realm of natural order. To say, it is the law of Nature that when the heart ceases to beat the bodily life is extinct, is simply to formulate human experience with regard to death; but it is not to say

that that law of Nature is violated, or set aside, to affirm that in the case of a certain man the extinct life recommenced, the heart which had ceased to beat received a new impulse, and the functions of the organization were renewed. Until we can go deeper than our present knowledge of the laws of Nature, it is impossible to deny that, beyond the phenomena which we observe, there are agencies at work, which may come into relation with those laws of Nature, and produce results within the sphere of sense, though by causes operating *ab extrâ*. "*Nature*," then, we take to mean the universe as open to the observation and reason of man. "*Natural*," that which is capable of being reduced by the reason of man into an intelligible relation to fixed laws. "*Supernatural*," that which transcends the rationale of the human intellect, while still within the sphere of experience, and which points to the existence and agency of a Being, whose purposes and methods and the laws of whose action can only be partially learned, as He pleases to reveal them. It may be objected to this view of the supernatural that it philosophically includes the whole of human knowledge, beyond the limits of the understanding; for it has been shown by Kant that a speculative knowledge of existence is impossible to man. He is bound within the sphere of his own laws of thought. He looks at the universe only through the categories of his own understanding. But it is matter of fact that, while all existence is infinitely mysterious to man, there are certain facts and events in the history of the world which stand out from the rest, as not holding the same position in the succession of antecedents and consequences, not referable to the same natural, fixed order, and therefore as revelations or manifestations of that which, in this point of view, may rightly be called *supernatural*. If all Nature is supernatural in its origin, still there are facts which, at all events to man, are especially supernatural, and which compel him to acknowledge that he is in the midst of a universe only imperfectly understood; and that his true method of knowledge is that which makes him "the minister and interpreter of Nature," beginning with the con-

fession that he knows nothing, and so being made wise with the "wisdom which cometh from above."

2. *Miracles.* The argument from miracles will be considered in another chapter, but as the word must be frequently employed throughout the following course of reasoning, it will be well to remove ambiguity at the outset. In many minds the word *miracle* represents a physical fact only, and it is generally viewed as a physical fact produced by the direct interposition of Omnipotent power, apart from the working of the ordinary laws of Nature. This, however, is not the view of a miracle which is defended in this argument. The word "*miraculum*" is represented in the Bible by several words: σημεῖον, sign; τέρας, wonder; δύναμις, power, or exercise of power; ἔργον, work (see Heb. ii. 4, where the several terms are put together and placed alongside with gifts of the Holy Ghost, as the witness which God gave to His messengers); and the simplest meaning of it, which includes many varieties of manifestation, is an extraordinary fact or event whereby the authority of God is testified. But when we remember the various applications of the word, we see that it is not limited to the physical, material world, but may be referred to the moral world also. There are physical miracles, such as the wonderful works wrought by our Lord in Palestine; and there are moral miracles, such as the sudden conversion of the apostle Paul, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, indeed the whole work of Christianity in its first establishment in the world. It is a merely arbitrary limitation of the word which confines it to events in the material world. Nor have we any reason for believing that changes wrought in the hearts and characters of men are any less wonderful than external changes which cannot be explained by any of the known forces or laws of the material universe. It is only because the operation of mental and moral laws can be so little traced and formulated, that a moral miracle is more easily credited than a physical. We cannot explain the history of human character, therefore we have no clearly systematized body of laws to which we refer the

changes which take place in men's thoughts, and purposes, and moral action. In the wide region of mystery which it is acknowledged surrounds men's practical life, there is scope for many wonderful, inexplicable facts. We need not presuppose the interposition of any superhuman or supernatural agency. But in regarding events in the physical world it is presumed that human experience has been exhaustive, that we know what alone can occur in accordance with the fixed, unchangeable laws which have been discovered. A new event is therefore pronounced to be incredible, because it is inexplicable. But it will be evident that such a position is neither justifiable by philosophy nor morally sound. There is no authority in human reason to pronounce the new and extraordinary event impossible or incredible, whether it be in the region of the physical or in the region of the moral, for both regions are imperfectly known by man. The main idea of a miracle is its adaptation to the special use assigned it, in connection with revelation and the purposes of God. It may be simply the sign of authority in a messenger; or it may be a work of mercy and embodiment of truth; or it may be, as in the case of the miraculous foresight of the prophet, a substantive part of the process of revelation; or again, in the person of Christ, and in the inspiration of the apostles, and in the moral wonders of the early Christian Church, the miracle is not one particular event, but rather the manifest presence and agency of the Divine in man. The idea of miracles must be large enough to include all these and other applications of the word, and therefore we must protest against any such limitation of it as shall represent it in a special antagonism to Nature.

This subject has been ably treated by Prebendary Row in his Bampton Lectures on "Christian Evidences viewed in Relation to Modern Thought," pp. 54–72. "What, then," asks Mr. Row, "do we mean by a miracle? Viewed merely as an occurrence in the physical universe, it is an event of a very unusual character, for which none of its known forces are sufficient to account. If such an event can be proved

to have actually occurred, it leaves only two alternatives, either that its existence must have been due to the action of some unknown force which has manifested itself on this special occasion only; or to the energy of a Being who is able either to combine the existing forces in the universe in such a manner as to produce the event in question, or to effect the same result by calling into existence a new force, or by the direct agency of His creative will. Viewed merely as an objective occurrence, therefore, there is no difference between a miracle and a very unusual event. The distinction is a creation of the mind, and consists in the fact that the occurrence of *the very uncommon event* has been subsequently accounted for by the action of the known forces of the universe, while the other (the miracle) cannot. Another important factor in the idea of a miracle is that its occurrence is ushered in by a prediction that it is going to happen, and thus it becomes a manifestation of purpose" (pp. 59, 60). "We are only encumbering the question with needless difficulties when we introduce into our conception of a miracle some theory as to the mode of the Divine action in its performance. It is clear that there is not the smallest necessity to affirm that the performance of one must involve either a directly creative act of God, or a violation or suspension of the action of any law or force in Nature. The only thing necessary to the conception of a miracle is that it should be some manifestation of the Divine activity which exhibits special purpose on the part of God, and the only thing necessary to its performance is the active operation or the combination of such forces as are adequate to accomplish it."

We may add to these remarks of the Bampton Lecturer, that it is the purpose of the miracle which makes it a miracle. If it is irrelevant to the purpose of God in revelation and redemption, we cannot believe it to be a miracle. Nor is there any necessity to suppose in *every* instance of a miracle that there is any new force or combination of forces, but simply that the event testified to the presence and agency of God. Take the case of the miraculous preservation of apostles in times of

danger, such as their deliverance by the sudden opening of the prison doors, or the harmless removal of the viper from Paul's hand. In such cases there is no reason to suppose any but natural physical causes in operation, but there was a manifest appointment of God and co-operation of the moral and physical laws to produce the result, which testified to the Divine authority. It seems somewhat perilous to admit, which some writers have done, that a fact, which in Nature is due to certain definite causes, which is the coming out to view of the result of certain antecedents, may have been produced by other natural causes or antecedents, as, *e.g.*, that in the miracle of the water turned into wine, and the multitude fed in the wilderness, the Lord summoned to His use on the occasion natural forces, or combinations of forces, different from those which would ordinarily effect the same result. Then the scientific objector interposes with his difficulty,—strictly speaking, the effect, having been produced by different causes, is not the same. The wine is not the juice of the grape which has grown, the bread is not properly bread, but a *tertium quid.* Is it not better to affirm nothing as to the *modus operandi?* Take the event as a whole. It is a sign of the presence and agency of God. Wine was drunk, bread was eaten. But in what way such a fact came about, it is impossible for us to say. Sufficient for us that "the glory" of the Divine Messenger was "manifested forth" and His disciples believed in Him. (ἐφανέρωσε τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ· καὶ ἐπίστευσαν εἰς αὐτὸν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ, John ii. 11.) We protest against the limitation of the Creator, not only to a mere mechanical adjustment of fixed forces, but to the production of effects in the visible world by mere material causes. We cannot know how He acts. His presence and action is the one fact of the universe. A miracle manifests it in one way, the order of Nature, as we observe it, in another. It is the same energy, the energy of Him "*in whom we live, and move, and have our being.*"

3. *Authority.* This word is principally employed in relation to Scripture. By authority is meant claim to obedience.

Admitting the existence of God, it is evident that there is authority in Him to command obedience from His creatures. But when we are dealing with fellow-creatures and the communications which are made from one to another, the idea of authority requires to be definitely distinguished and preserved from misapplication. In some departments of human belief authority is irrelevant. We do not want it, and we cannot have it, in matters of pure deduction and in the intuitions of the reason. We do not speak of authority in connection with the first truths of the intellect and common sense. But when we pass beyond this region of elementary truth, in which all are on an equality, then the sphere of authority commences. "All the facts, general and particular, on which the deductions of human knowledge are built, excepting only those of personal consciousness, are matter of testimony, and therefore fall within the province of authority." Authority may be in the person, or in the message which he bears, or in the method and manner in which that message is delivered. "If there have been minds possessing the intuitive sense of God with such strength and clearness as to constitute unclouded certainty, they are exceptions to the ordinary portion of humanity. If such exceptional character can be established as a fact, whether resulting from an original spiritual faculty lacking in other men, or from extraordinary Divine manifestations, evoking in them a faculty which in others lies dormant, it must invest their testimony with unique value. It constitutes them authorities concerning religious truth. The germinant points from which human history has branched off in new directions with fresh vigour and fruitfulness, have been individual minds, whose rare endowments proclaimed their vocation to lead, not follow, their fellow-men. National history, and even universal history, may at any moment receive a totally new impulse and inspiration, in politics, war, science, philosophy, arts, commerce, morals, through the appearance of some splendidly gifted mind. If the same thing has occurred in religion, this is what the whole analogy of human life leads us to expect. There is no *à priori*

presumption against the belief that there have been *authorities* in religion, men whose spiritual stature, far outtopping the common level of the race, enabled them to see what others cannot; or even that there has been a single Teacher, either endowed with such transcendent spiritual insight and sensibility, or distinguished by such direct communications from the Source of wisdom and life, that all the world may reasonably be invited to sit in reverent discipleship at His feet." [1]

The authority which is thus testified as existing in the persons, may be embodied in the writings which either directly or indirectly have come from them. In the case of *one central authority*, such as we conceive resident in the Lord Jesus Christ, as a Divine source of truth in the world, it is plain that such authority, if *in Him*, can be communicated *by Him*. In what way, must be a matter for careful consideration. The authority which cannot be delegated is no authority. If Jesus was the Son of God, He could select individual men to whom He could, to a certain extent, delegate His authority, whether by elevating them to a height of *spiritual discernment* above others, or by entrusting them with a *special vocation* to teach what He committed to them. Plainly such delegation is both possible and probable. A Divine Teacher would either remain among men, or He would provide for the continuance of His authority among them. At the same time, such a conception of *delegated authority* must be kept entirely separate from any theory of *an infallible Church*, or *apostolic succession*. It remains to be proved that the present Scriptures *represent* and *embody* the authority of God and of Christ. That is a question of evidence which we shall consider hereafter. But it is well to understand clearly in what sense authority can be said to attach to writings and to men. It is not as against reason or in lieu of reason, but as in all departments of truth, so in religion, authority commands a reasonable obedience. It appeals itself to the reason, and where it passes into regions whither the reason cannot follow it, it simply claims that the ascent of the mind and heart

[1] Conder: "Basis of Faith," pp. 343–4.

in the progress of faith and obedience shall not be arrested by the assertion of human pride; that the Authority which has vindicated itself, in the region of light, and within the bounds of understanding and experience, shall be obeyed when it demands a patient following, when it leads up the imperfect creature, dependent upon a guidance higher than himself, into "*that which eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.*" That there is such an Authority; that to obey it is light and life; that the way in which it is found is made plain and open in the sacred Scriptures; and that in that way there is a confidence and certainty to be obtained which is both rational and moral, will be the main position to be elucidated and sustained in the sequel of this work.

CHAPTER IV.

ARGUMENT FROM THE PERSON AND CHARACTER OF JESUS CHRIST.

WE now advance to the central position which is occupied by the Christian advocate, and which may be truly said to command all the remaining positions, in the defence of the citadel of truth. The substance of Christianity as a religion is the mission to the world of the Lord Jesus Christ: His person, His character, His doctrine, His work, form the main features in the Christian revelation. Take away Jesus Christ from the Bible, and its distinctive character as a Divine revelation is gone. Take away the reality of the personal Redeemer, and His influence from the history of Christianity, and it becomes an empty dream and illusion.

We possess two kinds of evidence that Jesus Christ actually existed, and that He was what Christians believe Him to have been: the one is the purely *historical* evidence, which traces the facts and ideas of the Christian history during the last eighteen centuries back to their antecedents in the One Divine Man from whom they came, and from whom they derived their special character. The other kind of evidence may be called the *documentary*. Here are certain sacred writings, the genuineness and authenticity of which can be certified on independent grounds, both external and internal, the Gospels and Epistles. In them we find a presentment which is perfectly distinct, harmonious, complete; which, in short, may be said to be the soul of the writings, their essential meaning and worth. We can have no reasonable doubt whatever that the early Christians, to whom we owe these New Testament writings, believed Jesus Christ to be what He is represented to be on their pages; and we have

just as little doubt that the facts of His history, the features of His character, the words which are ascribed to Him, are substantially accurate transcripts of the wonderful Personality and ministry which appeared in Palestine eighteen hundred years ago.

This is not the place to meet carping objections to the Scripture record. It is admitted by the most intelligent sceptics that Jesus Christ existed, and that He was in all essential respects, apart from any dogma as to His nature, in His life and character, what the evangelists have described Him. The argument, then, takes the following form. Jesus Christ is a phenomenon in human history. That phenomenon must be accounted for, either by the known laws of the universe, or by ascribing it to causes which, being inscrutable to us and superhuman, may be denominated *miraculous.* A person, a character, a life, may be *a moral miracle,* that is, it may be the evidence of the existence and agency of that which cannot be brought under the ordinary laws of Nature and human life, therefore of the supernatural or superhuman, whether physical, moral, or spiritual. Now the unbeliever is bound to substitute for the Christian explanation of the facts, which ascribes them to the manifestation of the Divine in the sphere of the human, some other, which shall neither pervert nor ignore them. If there are laws of human character and action which suffice to account for the facts which we identify with the name of Jesus Christ, let them be clearly made out and applied to the gospel history. If the facts are unique, and so extraordinary that they must be pronounced absolutely mysterious and inexplicable by the philosopher and scientist, then the field is open for the Christian to come in, with his appeal to the heart, to yield itself to the evidence of a Divine revelation. The subtlety of the modern German philosophico-critical school has been expended in an attempt to bring the facts under laws of reason, to find some theory which shall put them in intelligible relation to the universe, as philosophy and science interpret it; but the attempt, though made with profound thought and marvellous industry

and patience, has utterly failed to give satisfaction. Notwithstanding the efforts of Strauss and Baur, and the influence of Hegelian idealism, the facts remain as they were, incapable of being adjusted into any philosophical theory which solves their mysteriousness. All that the critics have achieved is to throw down into the Gospels a mass of cloud from their own speculations, which has obscured the beauty of the facts, and turned them into a chaotic confusion. We come back to the simple record and ask again, clearing away all these misty surroundings, and letting the facts themselves stand out in their vivid reality and wonderfulness— *What manner of man was this?* And we maintain that, at least a negative answer, can be given to the question. Jesus Christ was *not* a merely human being acting under the ordinary laws of human life and action; His person, His character, His work, His whole history and influence in the world, constitute *a moral miracle*, which compels us to believe in the Divine authority of Christianity. This, then, we shall support under the following heads: I. The character of Jesus Christ was morally perfect. II. The portraiture of the Gospels is a unity. III. The facts of the history reveal the presence and agency of Divine power. IV. The influence of Jesus Christ upon humanity as a whole, and upon the course of the world's history, is miraculous. V. The contrast between the teaching of Christ and that of merely human teachers, such as heathen philosophers, can only be explained by supposing that His wisdom was above that of man.

I. *The moral perfection of the character of Jesus Christ.* It is of no importance to the argument to prove that the gospel portraiture is a transcript of a real person. If it be a purely ideal character, then the moral miracle is in the conception of such an ideal. We are making a *greater* demand upon reason when we ascribe such a portraiture to the imagination of Galilean Jews, than when we explain it by the admission that the person existed from whom it was taken. The moral perfection of Jesus Christ was not attained (if perfection could be

attained), but may be seen in the narrative to belong to Him from the first. He begins life as a morally perfect being, and the portrait which we look upon in the Gospels, taken at different times, when He was a child, when He came forth from obscurity to a public ministry, when He finished His course at three and thirty years of age on the cross, though they are different aspects of His person, all agree in moral perfection. "His childhood is an unspotted and withal a kind of celestial flower." The purity, simplicity, obedience, loveableness, which we regard as attributes of the childlike character are all there in the youth of Jesus. He grew up in favour with God and man; He grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him. At twelve years old, while He astonished all with His intelligence and wisdom, He still was subject to His parents, without the characteristics of a forward intellect separated from a pure and lofty moral nature; but He is, even then, "about His Father's business," an eminently religious child. We know but little of the growth of Jesus. He was in silence and obscurity until the time came for His showing unto Israel. The moral atmosphere of a quiet, devout Galilean family, would be favourable to the development and maturity of such features of character, as we catch the glimpse of in the slight notices of the evangelists—His piety, study of God's word, purity and humility. But we have no reason to believe, from any facts which are before us in relation to the life of Palestine at that time, that apart from special Divine gifts personally bestowed, such a character as that of Jesus would be likely to be formed by the mere influence of its surroundings. True, had we *no more* to account for than the childhood of Jesus, we might ascribe it to the nurture of Joseph and Mary, and the moral atmosphere in which it grew. But we connect it with what follows. The child became the man. The secret came forth to view. The full corn was brought forth in the ear. That such a childhood was not at all likely to have been the creation of Jewish minds is evident from the kind of details which we find in fictitious

writings about our Lord, as also in other Jewish writings in which the ideas of childhood then adopted are seen. The apocryphal gospels are full of empty tales about the child Jesus, representing Him as a prodigy of power, and at the same time a very ordinary child in temper and infirmities. He is made to use His miraculous gifts to gratify childish caprice and passion—pursuing other children when they refused to play with Him and turning them into birds; killing with a word a child that accidentally ran against Him; disputing with His teacher over the alphabet, and when the teacher struck Him, putting forth His power to crush him, withering his arm and throwing him down dead. "His mother sends Him to the well for water, and having broken His pitcher, He brings the water in His cloak. He goes into a dyer's shop, when the dyer is out, and throws all the cloths he finds into a vat of one colour; but when they are taken out, behold, they are all dyed of the precise colour that was ordered. He commands a palm tree to stoop down and let Him pluck the fruit, and it obeys. When He is carried down into Egypt, all the idols fall down wherever He passes, and the lions and leopards gather round Him in a harmless company. Thus the Gospel of the Infancy gives us a picture of the wonderful childhood of Jesus. How unlike that holy flower of paradise, in the true Gospels, which a few simple touches make to bloom in beautiful self-evidence before us!"[1] The Rabbinical writings furnish many instances, as will be seen in the works of Josephus, of the same delight in mere wonderment, which is so entirely in contrast with the simplicity and purity of the gospel narrative. We cannot conceive such a portrait of the child Jesus to be merely imaginary. If it was the true likeness of a real person, then the moral perfection of the child is unique.

But it is when we regard the mature humanity of Jesus Christ, that the argument from His character becomes the most power-

[1] Bushnell: "Nature and the Supernatural," pp. 217–18.

ful. He claimed, Himself, to be absolutely sinless. The narrative of the Temptation implies that He was morally perfect, capable of resisting evil to the uttermost. There is no incident in the history which can be fairly employed to convict the Lord of any moral imperfection; while the benevolence, self-sacrifice, humility, patience, fortitude, trust in God, truthfulness, and majesty of character, are exhibited in a great variety of situations and under the most trying circumstances, so that even the most determined unbelievers in Christianity have been compelled to acknowledge that the moral homage given to Jesus is His due. Certain objectors have alleged that there was impatience in Jesus, that He yielded at times to undue indignation against His enemies, that His rebukes of the Pharisees and Scribes were more severe than became a perfectly pure mind, that in His rejection by the religious leaders of Palestine He became the victim of democratic violence, and that there was a reaction in Him from "intoxicated Galilean enthusiasm," to sullen and passionate denunciation of His opponents. It is scarcely worth while to meet this allegation with a serious refutation. The sufficient reply, however, is found in the absolute sublimity of the character as a whole, with which such features would be morally, indeed philosophically irreconcilable. Individual instances, such as the cursing of the fig-tree, must be explained by a candid study of their relation to the purpose and intention of Jesus at the time. Certainly the familiar saying may be applied to Him, "nothing in His life became Him like the leaving it." We can look back from the cross through the preceding narrative, and if there are facts which require elucidation, we can hold them up in the light of that Divine resignation, calmness, moral victory, and see that they are all in perfect harmony with the character of Him who in the extremity of suffering and shame was at the height of His self-control, benevolence, trust in God, and heavenly mindedness. We may set over against the carping criticisms of a few perverse and morally insensible minds, which have dared to find fault with the character of

Jesus, the testimony of an admiring world and an innumerable multitude of worshipping followers.

The following eloquent passage from the pages of Professor Rogers, in his "Defence of the Eclipse of Faith," expresses the feeling of a devout and philosophical student of the Bible, weighing such criticisms of the Lord's character against the facts of the evangelical narrative. "Little as such criticism is in itself," says Professor Rogers, "it absolutely vanishes, in the face of all those glorious scenes with which the evangelical narrative abounds, but of which there is in such criticism an entire oblivion. But humanity will not forget them; men still wonder at the 'gracious words that proceeded out of Christ's mouth,' and persist in saying, 'Never man spake like this man.' The brightness of the brightest names pales and wanes before the radiance which shines from the person of Christ. The scenes at the tomb of Lazarus, at the gate of Nain, in the happy family at Bethany, in the 'upper room,' where He instituted the beautiful feast which should for ever consecrate His memory, and bequeathed to His disciples the legacy of His love; the scenes in the garden of Gethsemane, on the summit of Calvary, and at the sepulchre; the sweet remembrance of the patience with which He bore wrong, the gentleness with which He rebuked it, and the love with which He forgave it; the thousand acts of benign condescension by which He well earned for Himself, from self-righteous pride and censorious hypocrisy, the name of the 'friend of publicans and sinners';—these, and a hundred things more which crowd these concise memorials of love and sorrow with such prodigality of beauty and of pathos, will still continue to charm and attract the soul of humanity, and on these the highest genius as well as the humblest mediocrity will love to dwell. These things lisping infancy loves to hear on its mother's knees; and over them age, with its grey locks, bends in devoutest reverence. Yes, before infidels can prevent men from thinking as they ever have done of Christ, they must blot out the gentle words with which, in the presence of austere hypocrisy, the Saviour welcomed that timid guilt,

that could only express its silent love in an agony of tears;—they must blot out the words addressed to the dying penitent, who, softened by the majestic patience of the mighty Sufferer, detected at last the Monarch under the veil of sorrow, and cast an imploring glance to be 'remembered by Him when He came into His kingdom';—they must blot out the scene in which the demoniacs,—or the maniacs, if the infidel will, for it does not help him,—sat listening at His feet, and 'in their right mind';—they must blot out the remembrance of the tears which He shed at the grave of Lazarus, not, surely, for him whom He was about to raise, but in pure sympathy with the sorrows of humanity, for the myriad myriads of desolate mourners who could not, with Mary, fly to Him and say, 'Lord, if Thou hadst been here my mother,—brother,—sister had not died';—they must blot out the record of these miracles which charm us, not only as proofs of His mission and guarantees of the truth of His doctrine, but as they illustrate the benevolence of His character, and are types of the spiritual cures His gospel can yet perform;—they must blot out the scenes of the sepulchre, where love and veneration lingered, and saw what was never seen before, but shall henceforth be seen to the end of time, the tomb itself irradiated with angelic forms and bright with the presence of Him 'who brought life and immortality to light';—they must blot out the scene where deep and grateful love wept so passionately, and found Him unbidden at her side,—type of ten thousand times ten thousand, who have 'sought the grave to weep there,' and found joy and consolation in Him 'whom though unseen they loved';—they must blot out the discourse in which He took leave of His disciples, the majestic accents of which have filled so many departing souls with patience and with triumph;—they must blot out the yet sublimer words in which He declares Himself 'the Resurrection and the Life,'—words which have led so many millions more to breathe out their spirits with childlike trust, and to believe, as the gate of death closed behind them, they would see Him who is invested with

the 'keys of the invisible world,' 'who opens and no man shuts, and shuts and no man opens,' letting in through the portal which leads to immortality, the radiance of the skies;—they must blot out, they must destroy, these and a thousand other such things, before they can prevent Him from having the pre-eminence, who loved, because He loved *us*, to call Himself the 'Son of man,' though angels called Him the 'Son of God.'"[1]

We will now add to this testimony of a believer some, the value of which is perhaps still greater,—those of unbelievers—which may be gathered in abundance from the writings of men who have either opposed the Christian religion, or at least have not yielded their spirits entirely to the influence of Christ, and represent the side of scepticism.

The first of these testimonies we take from J. J. Rousseau, who cannot certainly be suspected of undue partiality towards anything Christian. In his "Emile," IV. vol. ii. pp. 110–11, he writes thus of the character of Jesus Christ: "This Divine book (the gospel), the only one necessary for a Christian, and the most useful of all to every one, even though not a Christian, needs only to be considered to fill the soul with a love for its author and a desire of fulfilling its precepts. Never virtue spake in such sweet language. Never was the most profound wisdom expressed with such energy and simplicity. We never leave off reading it without perceiving ourselves better than before. The majesty of the Scriptures astonishes me; the holiness of the gospel speaks to my heart. Examine the works of the philosophers with all their pomp; how insignificant are they when compared with this! Can a book, at once so sublime and wise, be the work of man? Can the Person, whose history it relates, be Himself a man? Does it contain the language of an enthusiast, or an ambitious sectary? What sweetness, what purity in His manners! What affecting goodness in His instructions! What sublimity in His maxims! What profound wisdom in His discourses! What presence of mind! what ingenuity and justness in His replies!

[1] Pp. 141–3.

What government of His passions! Where is the man, or philosopher, who knows how to act, suffer, and die, without weakness or ostentation? When Plato describes his imaginary good man, with all the ignominy of guilt yet worthy of every reward of virtue, he paints, feature for feature, Jesus Christ. The resemblance is so striking that all the fathers have taken notice of it; and that it is not possible to be deceived therein. How prejudiced, how blind must we be, to dare to compare the son of Sophroniscus with the Son of Mary! How far distant from each other! Socrates, dying without pain, without ignominy, sustains easily his character to the end. And if this easy death had not honoured his life, we might doubt whether Socrates, with all his genius, was other than a sophister. We are told he invented morality; but others before him had practised it; he only declared what they had done, and reduced into precepts their examples. Aristides had been just before Socrates told us what justice was. Leonidas had died for his country before Socrates had made the love of our country a duty. Sparta was free from luxury before Socrates praised temperance, before he recommended virtue. Greece abounded with virtuous men. But whence could Jesus have taken, among His countrymen, this elevated and pure morality, of which He alone has given the precept and the example? From the bosom of the most furious bigotry, the most exalted wisdom is heard; and the simplicity of the most heroic virtues honours the vilest of the people. The death of Socrates, philosophizing undisturbedly among his friends, is the most easy that can be desired. That of Jesus, expiring amidst torments, railed at, vilified and cursed by every one, is the most dreadful that can be apprehended. Socrates taking the poisoned cup, blesses him who presented it and weeps for him. Jesus, in the midst of the most frightful torments, prays for the merciless butchers. Yes, if the life and death of Socrates are those of a philosopher, the life and death of Jesus Christ are those of a God. Should we suppose the gospel was a story, invented to please? It is not in this manner that we forge tales; for the actions of

Socrates, of which no person has the least doubt, are less satisfactorily attested than those of Jesus Christ. In short, when all is done, it is only concealing the difficulty, without destroying it. It would be more inconceivable to suppose that several persons in concert composed this book, than that one person only furnished the subject thereof. Never did the Jewish authors discover such language or morality (*ni ce ton, ni cette morale*); and the gospel has such striking marks of truth, and so perfectly inimitable, that the invention of it would be more astonishing than the hero of the subject. The precepts of Plato are often very sublime, but he sometimes is in error; and how far do not those errors extend? As to Cicero, can it be reasonably supposed that this rhetorician had composed his 'Offices' without Plato? The gospel alone is, with respect to morality, ever certain, ever true, ever uniform, and consistent with itself."

We may place beside these last remarks of the Swiss sceptic, the observation of Goethe, who, though too wise a man to be an opponent of Christianity, yet by his position or philosophic and literary indifference to positive faith, must be regarded as giving an unbiassed testimony to the gospel. "I esteem the Gospels," Goethe said to Eckermann,[1] "to be thoroughly genuine, for there shines forth from them the reflected splendour of a sublimity proceeding from the person of Jesus Christ, and of so divine a kind as only the Divine could ever have manifested upon earth."

The following touching words are quoted by Luthardt[2] from Matthias Claudius in his "Briefe an Andres," Pt. VI. p. 95, and Pt. IV. p. 119, etc. :—"No one ever thus loved, nor did anything so truly good and great as the Bible tells us of Him ever enter into the heart of man. It is a *holy form* rising like a star in the night upon the poor pilgrim, and satisfying his inmost craving, his most secret hopes and wishes. And then a Deliverer from all want, from all

[1] "Conversations," iii. 371.
[2] "Apologetic Lectures," vol. i., appx.

evil. A Redeemer from sin! A Saviour such as the Bible depicts the Lord Jesus to have been, who went about doing good, yet had Himself no place where He might lay His head; who spared no pains, and refused no shame; who humbled Himself even to death upon the cross, that He might finish His work; who came into the world to save the world; who was there in scourged andtormented, and departed thence with a crown of thorns upon His head! Didst thou ever hear of such a thing, and do not thy hands fall down upon thy lap? It is truly a mystery, and we do not understand it; but it comes from God and from heaven, for it bears the stamp of heaven, and overflows with Divine mercy. One might well suffer oneself to be branded and broken on the wheel for the *mere idea*, and he who can be stirred to laughter or mockery must be mad. He whose heart is in the *right place* lies in the dust, rejoices and prays."

Napoleon said to Count Mentholon: "Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne and myself founded great empires; but upon what did the creations of our genius depend? Upon force. Jesus alone founded His empire upon love, and to this very day millions will die for Him." While we cannot reconcile the testimony of such a man as Napoleon to Christ with his own character, still there was a penetration in his genius which we can scarcely doubt, and the testimony, as an abstract recognition of truth, was sincere, however little Napoleon himself followed the dictates of his own judgment. The following remarks of this astonishing man are found in Bertrand's "Memoirs" (Paris, 1844):—"If once the Divine character of Christ is admitted, Christian doctrine exhibits the precision and clearness of algebra, so that we are struck with admiration at its scientific connection and unity. The nature of Christ is, I grant it, from one end to another, a web of mysteries; but this mysteriousness does but correspond to the difficulties which all existence contains; let it be rejected, and the whole world is an enigma; let it be accepted, and we possess a wonderful explanation of the history of man.

The gospel possesses a secret virtue, a something which works powerfully, a warmth which both influences the understanding and penetrates the heart. The gospel is no mere book, but a living creature with an agency; a power which conquers all that opposes it. Here lies this book of books upon the table; I do not tire of reading it, and do so daily with equal pleasure. The soul charmed with the beauty of the gospel is no longer its own possession; God possesses it entirely; it is He who directs its thoughts and faculties; it is His. What a proof of the Divinity of Jesus Christ! Yet in this absolute sovereignty He has but one aim: the spiritual perfection of the individual, the purification of his conscience, his union with what is true, the salvation of his soul. Men wonder at the conquests of Alexander. But here is a Conqueror who draws men to Himself for their highest good; who unites to Himself, incorporates into Himself, not a nation, but the whole human race. What a miracle! The human soul, with all its faculties, becomes an annexation to the existence of Christ."

We now pass on to the testimony of one who may certainly be described as the most acute and philosophical of modern sceptics, Mr. J. S. Mill. In summing up the general results of his reasonings on Theism and Revelation, Mr. Mill observes, that the most valuable part of the effect on the character which Christianity has produced, is by holding up in a Divine Person a standard of excellence and a model for imitation. "For it is Christ, rather than God, whom Christianity has held up to believers, as the pattern of perfection for humanity. It is the God incarnate, more than the God of the Jews, or of Nature, who, being idealized, has taken so great and salutary a hold on the modern mind. And whatever else may be taken away from us by rational criticism, Christ is still left; a unique figure, not more unlike all His precursors than all His followers, even those who had the direct benefit of His personal teaching. It is of no use to say that Christ as exhibited in the Gospels is not historical, and that we know not how much of what is admirable has been superadded by the tradition of His followers.

The tradition of followers suffices to insert any number of marvels, and may have inserted all the miracles which He is reputed to have wrought. But who among His disciples or among their proselytes was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus, or of imagining the life and character revealed in the Gospels? Certainly not the fishermen of Galilee; as certainly not St. Paul, whose character and idiosyncrasies were of a totally different sort; still less the early Christian writers, in whom nothing is more evident than that the good which was in them was all derived, as they always professed that it was derived, from the higher source. About the life and sayings of Jesus there is a stamp of personal originality combined with profundity of insight, which, if we abandon the idle expectation of finding scientific precision where something very different was aimed at, must place the Prophet of Nazareth, even in the estimation of those who have no belief in His inspiration, in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius of whom our species can boast. When this pre-eminent genius is combined with the qualities of probably the greatest moral reformer and martyr to that mission, who ever existed upon earth, religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor, even now, would it be easy, even for an unbeliever to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavour so to live that Christ would approve our life."[1]

To this testimony we may add that of Mr. Lecky, whose "History of Morality from Augustus to Charlemagne," is written in a rationalistic spirit, which does not admit the supernatural, and does not regard Christianity as a Divine revelation, but in which occur the following admissions in respect to the character of Jesus Christ.[2] "It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character, which, through all the changes of eighteen centuries, has

[1] "Essays on Religion," pp. 253–5.
[2] Vol. ii. p. 8.

filled the hearts of men with an impassioned love, and has shown itself capable of acting in all ages, nations, temperaments, and conditions; has not only been the highest pattern of virtue, but the highest incentive to its practice, and has exerted so deep an influence, that it may be truly said, that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers, and than all the exhortations of moralists. This has indeed been the well-spring of whatever has been best and purest in the Christian life. Amid all the sins and failings, amid all the priestcraft, the persecution and fanaticism which have defaced the Church, it has preserved, in the character and example of its Founder, an enduring principle of regeneration."

We conclude this review of the argument from the moral character of Jesus Christ, with the eloquent words of Dr. Bushnell, who has treated this subject fully in his work "Nature and the Supernatural," chap. x.: "The character of Jesus Christ forbids His possible classification with men."[1] "We have now," he says, "sketched some of the principal distinctions of the superhuman character of Jesus. We have seen Him unfolding as a flower, from the germ of a perfect youth; growing up to enter into great scenes, and bear His part in great trials; harmonious in all with Himself and truth, a miracle of celestial beauty. He is a Lamb in innocence, a God in dignity; revealing an impenitent but faultless piety, such as no mortal ever attempted, such as, to the highest of mortals, is inherently impossible. He advances the most extravagant pretensions, without any show of conceit, or even seeming fault of modesty. He suffers without affectation of composure, and without restraint of pride, and suffers as no mortal sensibility can, and where, to mortal view, there was no reason for pain at all; giving us not only an example of gentleness and patience in all the small trials of life, but revealing the depths even of the passive virtues of God, in His agony and the patience of His suffering love. He undertakes also a plan, universal in extent, perpetual in

[1] Pp. 213-58.

time, viz., to unite all nations in a kingdom of righteousness under God; laying His foundations in the hearts of the poor, as no great teacher had ever done before, and yet without creating even a faction, or stirring one partisan feeling in His followers. In His teachings He is perfectly original, distinct from His age, and from all ages; never warped by the expectations of His friends; always in a balance of truth, swayed by no excesses, running to no oppositions or extremes; clear of all superstition, and equally clear of all liberalism; presenting the highest doctrines in the lowest and simplest forms; establishing a pure, universal morality never before established; and with all His intense devotion to the truth, never anxious, perceptibly, for the success of His doctrine. Finally, to sum up all in one, He grows more great, and wise, and sacred, the more He is known; needs, in fact, to be known, to have His perfection seen. And this, we say, is Jesus the Christ; manifestly not human, not of our world, some being who has burst into it, and is not of it. Call Him for the present that 'Holy Thing' and say, 'By this we believe that Thou camest forth from God.'"

II. *The portraiture in the Gospels is a unity.* This is a portion of the argument which is of considerable importance, although, as it was observed by Mr. Mill, whether we are able to maintain the correctness and truthfulness of the *portrait* or not, the moral proof of the *character* still remains, and has wrought its work in Christian history. At the same time, it adds much to the weight of the argument to prove that Christ's character was *a supernatural fact*, to show that it was not the result of the gradual exhibition of moral forces, immanent in the human race, but the introduction at a particular point of time, and not accountable by merely human agencies, of a living personality, whose effect on the race has been supreme. It is impossible to deny that we have four separate narratives of the history and teaching of Jesus Christ. There are correspondences between them, in some instances, especially in the cases of the first two Gospels, similarity of words in the

description of the same events. But no candid student of the four Gospels will hesitate to admit that, whether using the same sources or not, the four accounts have been prepared by the writers independently of one another. It will also be admitted that in the style of the evangelists, at all events of the first three or synoptists, there is what Professor Rogers has called a "*neutral tint*": "They simply retail facts, or what, at all events, they declare to be facts—facts, too, which were certain to produce, as they ever have done, and do still, the most vehement ferment in the world, whether they be believed or denied. Yet the authors say nothing by way of preparation or apology; stoop to none of the rhetorical arts usually employed to conciliate attention, to soften hostility, to obviate prejudice. The writers have to declare certain facts, and whether men will receive them or not is not their business, but theirs whom they address. This more than judicial imperturbability, this want of *susceptibility* (as we should naturally call it), would surprise us in any writer; but in men who had devoted themselves to the maintenance of a great cause—a cause, if we may believe them, of transcendent importance—and under circumstances which, in all other cases, inevitably kindle enthusiasm and make men fanatics even in spite of themselves, it is incomprehensible. Yet these men seemingly maintain an air perfectly stolid; and we should even call it *stupid*, if we did not know the character of their compositions, and the effect which these have had on the world. They content themselves with the most colourless and passionless statement of what purport to be *facts*. They might be mere machines, for anything that appears in their manner to the contrary."[1] And yet this perfectly simple, natural, matter of fact narrative, fourfold as it is, is consistent with itself. There may be slight discrepancies here and there in detail, which rather point to the truthfulness of the writers than to their lack of sincerity and simplicity as narrators. But there is so much harmony between them that it is possible, as has been shown over and

[1] "Supernatural Origin of the Bible," pp. 231–2.

over again, to draw from them a portrait of Jesus Christ which any one would admit is the portrait of a real character. Can we imagine, for a moment, that four different Christian writers put together four different fictitious descriptions, with either no foundation of fact to go upon, or only a very slight one? This would be incredible. If, then, there were facts on which they built up their narratives, must not the essential facts, the personality and supernatural character of Jesus Christ, have been among them? Can we conceive that on the basis of a few events and sayings in the history of one who was no more than an ordinary man, a Galilean prophet, a few uneducated, and by no means superior, Jewish writers erected the superstructure of the gospel? "If Christ be but a *phantom*, to which they have given greater substance than belongs to any character in history; whose imaginary career (more romantic than romance itself) they have made so many myriads accept as historic verity; for whom they have created an empire over the minds of men mightier and more durable than king or conqueror ever established before; to whom homage is given by far more various races than were ever combined under one sceptre; and who exacts more from the willing love of His subjects than all the tortures of tyranny ever exacted from their fear; if that 'phantom' Christ was really the handiwork of the evangelists, the men who achieved that unparalleled feat ought certainly to be the wonder of mankind." The critical school, as we shall show hereafter, have utterly failed to sustain their theory, that the present Gospels were the subsequent developments of the Christian mind, out of a small germ of reality; for, in the first place, the theory itself is not proof against the test of fact—the mythical origin of the narrative cannot be intelligently made out in regard to the bulk of the history, and a *petitio principii* is involved in such a view. If the Christian mind wrought upon a few facts and made them into their present shape, how are we to account for the existence of that Christian mind? Whence the desire to exalt Christ? Whence the idea which is supposed to have

actuated the writers? Whence the motive which was in the background of the mythical tendency to which the story is ascribed? "The wonder is rather increased than diminished. For we have at least the *names*, though little else, of those who composed the Gospels; a few, though very few, particulars of their history. But according to this theory, those who really founded the solid empire of a visionary Christ have hidden themselves more effectually than even the authors of the Gospels have done! If the authors of the Gospels be no more than portrait painters, it is the portrait they have left us of Christ that has chiefly secured Him the homage of the world. The hints and whispers of myth on which the evangelists worked (if they really wrought from such things) would soon have been buried in oblivion had they not so preserved them." We can understand a great mind producing an ideal representation of facts, but in such cases it is easy to see that the ideal is an ideal, not a literal transcript of facts; but in the case of the Gospels we have not an ideal picture but a history, and we cannot explain the undoubted facts of the early Christian Church unless we admit that, substantially, these narratives are historical. Indeed, it may be taken for granted that the Gospels are genuine records. Even the rationalistic school, and many of the critical school of Germany, while denying the miraculous, are compelled to admit that the Gospels are genuine, or if they doubt the fourth Gospel, they accept the synoptists as authentic. We affirm, then, that the only possible position which we can hold in regard to the character of Jesus Christ, if we accept these narratives as genuine, is, that which evidently was the position of the writers, that He was more than man, and that His works and words were the manifestation of an energy, in the sphere of earthly things, which we cannot ascribe to the ordinary, known, natural forces, or moral forces, of the world; in other words, His history and doctrine were miraculous. The unity which is presented to view, in the variety of representation and detail, is the unity of a superhuman personality, a character altogether exceptional,

and which we can refer to no class or order of created beings that we know. Either He was *man, and no more than man*, or, as He could not be less than man, He was *more than man.* To say He was man, and no more than man, is to leave altogether unaccounted for the greater portion of the narrative, and indeed it is to make the whole of Christianity and Christian history an inexplicable enigma and mockery. He could not have been man alone, and have been so manifest an exception to the human race. If He was more than man, then the gospel representation must be accepted as a whole. He was one who wrought miracles, and whose character was immeasurably great and good. There is no necessity that we should at this point go further. What He was, if not a mere man, if above man, we need not define. Suffice it to say, that in Jesus Christ, as portrayed in the Gospels, we have *a unity*, which testifies to the existence and agency of that which cannot be referred to the known laws of the physical and moral world, and therefore leads us to believe in the supernatural or miraculous. We now proceed to a more direct examination of the testimony which we find in the evangelical records.

III. *The facts of the history reveal the presence and agency of Divine power.* We must here assume, for the purpose of argument, what we shall afterwards take up more particularly as matter of rational proof, that we possess, in the Gospels, a substantially trustworthy statement of fact. Let us, then, put together, briefly, the evidences of a power at work in the person and history of Jesus, which could be not less than Divine.

1. He is said to have healed all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. So, it might be replied, He would have done, if He was possessed of all the knowledge which man has obtained, of the human body and its ailments, and of the remedies applicable to them. But Jesus was not a trained physician. He was a carpenter, and we have no reason to believe that He had recourse to any unusual means of study or knowledge. Moreover, the cases which are described in the Gospels, such as *the deaf and dumb, the born blind, the paralyzed*, are cases which

imply the exercise of a power of healing certainly beyond all that we, at present, can conceive, in human skill and appliance. No doubt, many of those who came to Jesus for relief were suffering under curable diseases, which, in the present state of medical science, would be regarded as comparatively trivial. But we must apply to the whole narrative the principles which are required for any one feature of it, because it is a unity. If Jesus wrought cures of incurable complaints by a superhuman power, then we must believe that it was by the same power that He effected relief in every case. But—

2. He is said to have wrought works of healing by a word or a touch, and even at a distance from the object. This of course we cannot conceive to have been effected by any known laws of a physiological order, and implies the existence and agency of a power superhuman in its nature.

3. Jesus was possessed of an authority by which He commanded unclean spirits to leave those in whom they were, and His word was obeyed. We do not here enter into the question of demoniacal possession. If the fact be denied, and the phenomena referred to forms of epilepsy, mania, hysteria, etc., the difficulty of explaining the work wrought upon the persons is very little diminished. It seems impossible to deny that, both our Lord Himself, and His disciples, regarded the facts as they are represented. If, then, there were such cases of possession, the power which could command the unclean spirits was superhuman.

4. Jesus wrought changes, by His word, in the sphere of the material world, which can only be referred to the agency of Divine power. The turning of water into wine, the calming of a storm, the walking Himself upon the water and enabling His disciple to do the same, the miraculous draught of fishes, the feeding of the multitude in the wilderness with five barley loaves and two fishes, and other similar works which there is no need to enumerate, all are evidences of the existence and agency of a power above the known material laws of Nature, able to control and modify them. Whether that power *resided*

in Jesus or was simply *called into exercise* through the word of Jesus, is of no special importance to determine. It was present, and in operation.

5. The instances, which are given in the Gospels, of superhuman knowledge of men's thoughts and intentions, of superhuman control of their wills, of power to overawe them with the simple manifestation of His personal superiority, are evidences of the existence in the Lord of that which cannot be referred to a merely human source.

6. The three instances mentioned by the evangelists in which the dead were raised by the word of Jesus,—the daughter of Jairus, the widow's son at Nain, the body of Lazarus, having been in the tomb four days,—taken together with His own resurrection from the dead on the third day after His crucifixion, of which we have a full and detailed narrative, and which was made by the first preachers of the gospel the staple fact of their proclamation, must be regarded as the evidence of a power over life and death, either in Jesus Christ Himself as a person, or connected with His personality and mission. All that we need insist upon here is the fact that the dead were raised, that Jesus Christ Himself did rise, the power over death was exercised, the miracle was wrought, the Divine came into the sphere of the human.

7. Apart altogether from the incidents which are ordinarily denominated miraculous, the superiority of the personal character and teaching of Jesus Christ, especially in the circumstances and at the time of His appearing, cannot be explained on the commonly known principles of the development of humanity; nor will the parallel of exceptional men, great teachers, great poets, philosophers, philanthropists, great leaders of the race, at all suffice to explain the character of Jesus Christ. Not only was their history different, but their power has been so inferior, that it cannot properly be compared with the power of Jesus over the world. Moreover, the one supreme fact remains, Jesus was sinless. No attempt to disprove that representation of the evangelists and apostolic writers

has succeeded. His character is a miracle, and taken with all the other miracles in the gospel history, it proves the existence and agency of a superhuman, of a Divine power.

IV. *The influence of Jesus Christ upon humanity as a whole, and upon the course of the world's history, is miraculous.* This argument has been frequently urged, although perhaps the history has been employed more to confirm the truth of the facts than to prove their superhuman character. Prebendary Row, in his Bampton Lectures, "Christian Evidences viewed in Relation to Modern Thought," has laid special stress on this appeal to history, as evidence of the operation of a superhuman agency. He states the process of reasoning thus: "As an event manifesting purpose, for which the action of the forces of the material universe is insufficient to account, is a physical miracle, and proves the presence of a power different from these forces, so an event in the moral and spiritual world, for which the forces that energise in a man are insufficient to account, must be a moral miracle, and must prove the presence of a superhuman power. I claim on behalf of Jesus Christ, that His character and actions in history constitute a manifestation of such a power, the presence of which admits of an actual verification in the history of the past and the facts of the present. If I can establish the fact that Jesus Christ has acted on history with an energy which is absolutely unique, the proof of the miraculous actions attributed to Him in the Gospels will be rendered easy; for it would be far more improbable that such a person did not manifest a superhuman power in the material universe, than that He performed the miracles in question. In other words, the *à priori* difficulties attending them will disappear, and their occurrence can be proved by the evidence which is valid to establish the ordinary facts of history." Now the facts which reveal the influence and moral power of Jesus Christ may be looked at, either in the comprehensive survey of Christian history, or in the individual instances of marvellous effects, flowing from the one source, the personality of Christ. It might be sufficient to point to

great crises in the history of the Church, such as the day of Pentecost, the conversion of the Roman empire, the Reformation of Religion in Europe, the Revival of Religion in Great Britain and America during the last century under Wesley and Whitefield, the diffusion of Christianity under the influence of missionary zeal since the commencement of the nineteenth century; or again, to distinguished saints and martyrs and spiritual heroes, the long line of men "of whom the world was not worthy," all of whom were what they were, and accomplished what they did, because they believed in Jesus Christ. No one can deny the influence of His personality and character in such crises and individuals. It is so unique and so inexplicable, on any ordinary laws of human influence, that the candid mind will admit, it points to the superhuman. But it is possible that, in regard to great epochs in human history, so many other causes, both patent and latent, may be supposed in operation, that the force of the argument for the miraculous agency of Christ is not appreciated. And in the case of individual characters,—Augustine, St. Bernard, Luther, any of the great spiritual leaders of humanity,—it might be alleged that while they took the *form* of their character from Christ, the *matter* of it was due to their own originality and native superiority. In other words, such instances of human greatness may be simply referred to the catalogue of wonders in human history generally, which cosmical laws may suffice to account for, although we may not be able to trace the working of those laws in detail. But looking back upon the commencement of Christianity there is a certain definite body of facts which, every fair and honest mind will admit, is properly identified, in origin, with Jesus Christ.

The following summary of the historic certainties, which may be regarded as indisputable, is from Mr. Conder, in his "Basis of Faith," pp. 350–1:—1. That the Christian religion was founded by Jesus, who was crucified in or about the year 30 (A.D.) by Pontius Pilate, Roman Governor of Judea. 2. That His doctrines, with the narrative of His

life, death, and reported resurrection, were preached, first in Jerusalem and Palestine, afterwards throughout the empire and far beyond its Eastern frontier, by His personal disciples and their companions or converts. In no other way could His religion have spread as it did. 3. That within some ten years from the death of Jesus, Saul of Tarsus, a Jewish rabbi, of rare ability and energy, became a convert to Christianity, and thenceforth its foremost and most successful missionary. 4. That little more than thirty years after the death of Jesus (A.D. 64) Christians had become very numerous in Rome, as is proved by the persecution inflicted on them by Nero and his attempt to cast on them the odium of the burning of the city. 5. That in the first decade of the second century, about eighty years after the crucifixion, Christians were so numerous in Bithynia, that Pliny, the Roman governor, (an authority above suspicion), in his famous letter to Trajan, describes the temples as deserted, and the worship of the gods as well-nigh extinct. 6. That Rome and Bithynia were not exceptional cases, but examples of what had been going on in Asia, Greece, Italy, France, Spain, and North Africa, including the great cities of Alexandria and Carthage. Christian communities, termed "churches," were thus, in the early years of the second century, thickly sown throughout the civilized world. 7. That this multitude of widely-distributed churches, though afterwards combined into a vast organic whole under a powerful hierarchy, possessed at that early date no unity but the moral unity of common belief, sentiments, and customs, based on their common recognition of the supreme authority of Christ and His apostles. By virtue of them they formed a world-wide spiritual brotherhood, else impossible."

Now it is well to remark in looking at these facts, that the question is not, how it was that, when Christianity had thus achieved a moral supremacy, the Roman empire came under its dominion, but how it was that during the first two centuries, notwithstanding many decided and strenuous attempts of its enemies to suppress it, the Christian religion not only maintained a place

in the world, but achieved the highest place. The modern school of critics, headed by Baur and the Tübingen professors, and followed by M. Ernest Renan and others, have laboured to break the force of this historical argument;—*first*, by distinguishing between the earliest Christianity and Paulinism, and therefore attributing the special character of the later Christianity to the predominant influence of Paul, and the Hellenistic spirit which reigned through his higher culture; and *then*, by taking the victorious Christianity of the post-Nicene period, from the fourth century downwards, as the product of two factors, of which the one was the doctrine of the Christian religion modified by St. Paul, and the other the transferred power of the decaying Roman empire. Christianity entered upon an inheritance already prepared for it, and the chief facts of its subsequent empire are due to that on which it entered, and which was contributed to it from without. This reasoning, however, is entirely subverted by one fact,—the *moral* supremacy of Christianity was achieved before the material, and the inheritance of the Roman empire was delivered up to the Christian Church, only because the history of the Christian religion had proved that it was capable of taking the inheritance. No one can study the Christian writers of the first two centuries and deny that the influence of Jesus Christ is uppermost in their character. We cannot ascribe their Christianity to anything else than their faith in Christ. And as to mixture of Pauline Hellenism with the more Judaic basis of Christ's doctrine, even if it could be sustained by the evidence of fact, there would still remain the mystery to be accounted for, how it was that St. Paul became a convert to Christianity at all, and how it was that, having been a Pharisee of the Pharisees himself, he parted with all his Jewish prejudice and became a Hellenistic Christian. We are bound, in all fairness, to take the undoubted statements of such a man, which even the extreme critical school admit are to be found, in their genuine form, in the Epistles to the Galatians, Romans, and Corinthians, as evidence of his moral relationship to Jesus Christ. He himself

said that he was what he was because he believed in Christ: "For me to live is Christ." "Christ liveth in me," etc. Then, if it be granted that *the early Christians* were what they were because they were under the influence of Christ, and that *the Christian history* was what it was because it was an effect of which the power of Christ was the cause, we ask, What was that influence and power of Jesus Christ? "It is all important," says Mr. Row, "that we should observe in what this mighty influence, or in other words, this supreme greatness, of Jesus consists. It is not the mere result of either His doctrinal or His moral teaching; nor is it simply because His human life constitutes an embodiment of the morality which He taught. Nor is it the mere result of intellectual superiority, nor of all the causes combined which by their united action make a great man, in the ordinary acceptation of the term. The mighty influence of Jesus is founded on that Divine life which runs through His native character, as it is depicted by the evangelists; not merely in those actions which we designate miracles, but in every portion of it. This attractiveness culminates in one aspect of it—the perfection of self-sacrifice manifested in His life, followed by the divinest exhibition of love displayed in His voluntary death. This it is which distinguishes the greatness of Jesus from that of all other men, and constitutes the secret of His power. Wonderful is that great utterance of His, if we view it merely as a prediction: 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.' What human foresight could have anticipated the fact, that the crucifixion of a Galilean peasant would form the most attractive influence which has been exerted on the heart of man, throughout all succeeding ages!"[1]

Coming back, once more, to the argument from individual character. It is admitted that great Christians have existed, and that they themselves have ascribed their greatness to the influence of Jesus Christ. The objector who denies the supernatural in the Gospels and reduces the character of Jesus to

[1] Pp. 95–6.

the human standard, is bound to give some intelligible account of the rise of such men and their faith. "To deny the reality of their change," it has been well said, "and reduce their whole life and experience to a matter of illusion, requires a degree of effrontery and personal conceit that would repel any critic of only ordinary intelligence. For in these Christian myriads are grouped almost all the greatest scholars, philosophers and lawgivers, the most revered and stateliest names, the most beautiful and holiest characters, of Christendom. It cannot be said that these conversions are in any sense natural, or produced by natural causes, in the feeling and condition of the subject. Their affinities are all visibly transcendent, and their life really is, in one view, a kind of protest against nature and withdrawment from it; they are not changed in this manner by their own will. Whoever believes that a mortal man can take hold of the moral jargon into which his thoughts and passions are cast by sin, and bring himself back, item by item, into peace and harmony and the ennobled consciousness of good, ought to be able to believe in Christianity much more easily. But there is a certain inspiration, it may be said, that flows into men from the ideas they assume. Thus it may be conceived that the supposed convert, in these remarkable transformations of life and character, received first a theological preconception that a change thus and thus described is necessary to his salvation; and then, having his imagination powerfully excited by the struggles of supposed guilt and danger he is in, he conceives at last that the change required is actually passed upon him; whereupon he is set forward in high impulse into a new style of life, correspondent with the auspicious hallucination that has triumphed over his sin. And this is really the most plausible account that can be made of these changes in the interior history of souls, which does not suppose them to be referable to a supernatural Divine agency or providence. But what kind of mind is it that can be satisfied with one of its wise inventions, when, to account for the highest and divinest range of facts in man's spiritual history, it supposes whole

myriads of the strongest minds and noblest characters to have been inspired with so much goodness all their lives long by a hallucination?"[1] Nor is the rationalistic or positivist objector helped, in the least degree, by a principle of evolution. Even though we should admit the general position, that each particular fact in character and history is the outcome of the cosmic forces as a whole, an individual manifestation of a whole everywhere acting, still such a principle is not inconsistent with the position of the Christian, that there is a special connection between certain facts and certain characters and the personality of Jesus Christ, and that in Jesus Christ the cosmic forces acted in a totally different manner from that in which we behold them acting in the case of ordinary human character. In other words, Jesus Christ was exceptional, His history was miraculous. We do not escape the force of this exceptionality in Christ, by placing it within a vast circumference which we call the cosmos. Doubtless, in some sense it is true, the Divine in Christ was not an arbitrary introduction of the Divine into the sphere of the human, but the working out of that eternal purpose and thought which are in the universe as a whole; but to us, nevertheless, looking upon the facts, they are miraculous, if they are the special and intentional manifestation of the Divine, whereby our minds are lifted above the thought of a mere natural succession of antecedents and consequents, and led to believe in the personal presence and agency of God. Such assuredly is the effect of a candid study of Christian history and Christian biography, in connection with the Christian records. A Personality has been acting, all through the ages, who cannot be deemed merely one in the long line of human beings; He has broken through that line, and has come into His place in history, as one who cannot be described by the ordinary characteristics of humanity. He is a new man, and He is more than man. His influence bears witness to the action of a power which cannot be regarded as the mere normal power of human faculties, and the development of the latent forces of human

[1] Bushnell, pp. 340-1.

nature. We may decline to define it. We may object to call it the power of God. But it certainly is both superhuman and personal, and the interpretation which the Bible gives of the facts ought not to be thrown aside, as irrational, until some other is suggested, which is both abstractly conceivable and in harmony with the evidence of history. This alternative we press upon the unbeliever: accept the Christian standpoint, or furnish us with some other which is more intelligible. Explain the phenomena of Christian character and history by natural laws. If not, then admit the possibility of an explanation which, while it may involve the admission of the transcendental, does at least do no violence to reason by referring effects to inadequate causes; which accords with the analogy of Nature, in which there are mysteries equally great; and with the almost universal belief of the highest men of the race.

V. *The contrast between the teaching of Jesus Christ and that of merely human teachers, such as heathen philosophers, can be explained only by supposing that His wisdom was above that of man.* This argument from the moral teaching of Christianity to the superhuman power of Jesus Christ, has been so ably and fully elucidated by Prebendary Row, in his Bampton Lectures (Lecture III.) that it will not be necessary to do more than give a summary outline of his treatment of it. It may be assumed, as a preliminary basis of reasoning, that the moral world is subject to moral laws, as the physical to physical laws. There are no violent breaks in the moral development of men, so far as we study it in the light of history and modern philosophy. History proves that no human being, however great his genius, can wholly emancipate himself from the conditions imposed on him by his birth, and the moral and spiritual atmosphere in which he was educated. The cases of Mahomet and others, show, that however elevated the genius and great the moral force, still, while there is no more than the human in question, the impress of the time, place, and circumstances is indelible. Now, looking at the characteristics of Christ's teaching and of Christianity, we observe,—

1. That the teaching of Jesus Christ transcends the limits imposed on Him.

2. The moral teaching of Christianity, as a whole, transcends that of the great teachers of the ancient world, and solves problems they could not solve.

The moral teaching of the New Testament consists of (1) *a body of special precepts* in a very unsystematic form, prepared to meet particular emergencies, but not constituting a body of ethical doctrines, applicable to all time. (2) A number of principles which form *the foundation of all moral obligation*, catholic as humanity, embracing every conceivable form of duty. (3) The revelation of *a mighty moral and spiritual power* intended to render obedience to the moral law a possibility, to recover the fallen and elevate the holy to a higher degree of holiness, the power of faith, in its action on the moral nature.

The following are the chief points of contrast between Christian teaching and that of heathen philosophers, showing the transcendent character of Christ's doctrine.

1. *Earnestness, method, and aim.* Christianity assumes moral obligation, and enforces it by an appeal to every principle which acts upon human nature. Systematic moralists, apart from Christianity, have been occupied in dealing with abstract questions, such as concern the nature of moral obligation, and their systems have been stamped with an impress which is partial, national, and local. The new Testament is catholic as human nature.

2. *The freedom of Christianity from all attempts at political legislation.* In the case of ancient philosophers moral questions invariably assumed a political aspect, ethics were in fact a branch of politics. Their hope for the regeneration of man lay in such ideas, by which political and social institutions might be formed, and mankind trained to virtue. The Jew found, in the Old Testament, a system of political legislation of Divine authority : if Christianity had been the mere outcome of Judaism it would not have lacked this feature. The great Teacher professed to be the founder of a kingdom, yet the king-

dom which He set up was totally different from every other, based on conviction and persuasion alone. At one single bound Jesus Christ passed from the political, the formal, and the ritual, to the individual, the spiritual, and the moral. He thus manifested an insight, which raised Him above all the trammels imposed on Him, by His birth and His surroundings. An eminent illustration of the supreme wisdom of Christ's teaching is seen in the way in which slavery was dealt with in the early Church, the principles being inculcated which undermined the evil, while the political conditions involved in it were not interfered with. Had not this wisdom presided over the introduction of Christianity into the world it would not have survived the first century. It is not enough to talk of the *genius* of Jesus Christ: genius can only act in conformity with the laws of an intellectual and moral being.

3. *The teaching of Christianity has founded the religion of humanity.* (See John iv. 21, 24.) Spiritual worship, a religion of universal man, is declared to be the highest form of religion. The repudiation of what is national, local, and outward, is complete, and religion is declared to rest for evermore on the Fatherhood of God. Thus Jesus effected what the philosophers were unable to accomplish, the union of man's religious aspirations with his moral nature. Yet Jesus was born and nurtured amid the exclusiveness of Judaism. His insight was superhuman.

4. *The all-comprehensiveness of the Christian law of duty.* Three great moral principles are enounced: (1) Man's duty to man, as founded on, and originating in, the relation in which he stands to God. (2) Man's duty to man measured by the regard which he feels for himself. (3) Man's duty to man, measured and sanctioned by the obligation he is under to Jesus Christ. Thus *the law of duty* is (i.) *co-extensive with the human family*, which philosophy never did or could make it. How different the Christian view of our relation to the common Father from either that of ancient systems, which were narrow and national, or that of modern atheistic and pantheistic teaching, which finds a bond of unity in a common descent from bar-

barian ancestors. (ii.) *Self-determinative.* The individual conscience is made a law to itself. What I would have done to myself, is what I should do to another. (iii.) *Carried to extremest limits* in fulfilment. The love of Christ to man is made both the measure and the motive of the love of man to man. *Self-sacrifice* is the law of Christianity, and there is nothing like it elsewhere; and with this we may join *stewardship;* and these principles lift men above their selfishness, narrowness, and unfaithfulness, and make them both in public and private capable of the highest acts of service and devotion.

5. *The relative importance assigned in Christianity to the milder virtues.* Philosophers placed the political or heroical virtues first, the milder virtues occupy a wholly subordinate position, and *humility* has no place at all. This is exemplified in the ethics of Aristotle. Christianity puts the milder virtues in the forefront. It must be remembered that the Christian precepts, as given in the New Testament, do not form a complete moral code, but are adapted to special circumstances. Implicit obedience to governors, abnegation of the rights of property, are simply *precepts* adapted to the time, not universal moral principles applicable to all time. Political virtues, such as patriotism, receive but a partial recognition, but they are strongly exemplified in the actions of the great characters of Christianity, Christ Himself and St. Paul. As to the order of the virtues, history shows that the Christian order, the milder virtues first, courage, patriotism, and ambition in the second place, is the better for mankind. The place assigned to the milder virtues has had a softening and regenerating influence on the world.

6. *The views taken by Jesus Christ and by the philosophers of the extent of their respective missions.* Jesus addressed His mission to the masses of mankind, philosophers to a small spiritual aristocracy: philosophy had no gospel for the world. Jesus Christ called the sinners to repentance: philosophy addressed "those of mankind who have a natural tendency and disposition towards virtue." Jesus Christ is the Originator,

the Leader, and the Pioneer of every self-sacrificing effort which has been made for the improvement of mankind; its Example, and what is more, the motive force which has impelled all subsequent efforts. If this is due to mere genius, then it is unique in the history of mankind.

7. *The creation by Christianity of a mighty moral and spiritual power, which philosophy, while confessing the need of it, altogether failed to discover.* The ancient schools of philosophy bore witness to the moral helplessness of man, but provided no remedy. They pronounced on the degraded multitude the ban of spiritual excommunication, maintaining that the only hope was that they might be affected by the fear of punishment. Philosophy could appeal to reason, but could not produce convictions of sufficient strength to kindle into active energy the higher principles of our moral being. The appeals to the sense of the morally beautiful, to self-love, were vain, because there was no supporting principle. If self-control was lacking, philosophy could not supply it. There was no appeal to religious conviction. *Habit* is a powerful means of reformation, but it needs to be supplemented with a mightier influence; for, (1) It is slow in operation. (2) It cannot create a new principle of life, but only act through materials already existing; a lever, but requiring a fulcrum. (3) Habit requires an external power of coercion to be brought to bear, when the self-control is weakened. Hence the only hope of philosophy has been in the formation of institutions with training and coercing power; but such institutions are impossible. We must presuppose virtuous governors, and subjects willing to submit themselves to their guidance. The only hope of the modern philosopher is in "the survival of the fittest," a poor consolation to the perishing millions. Jesus Christ, on the other hand, has taught that the world can be regenerated, has supplied the only creative principle—faith, and the only great and permanent society—the Christian Church. Philosophy seeks the inward regeneration from the outward habit: Christ regenerates the habits by regenerating the man. And it may

be added, the power which Jesus Christ claims and which philosophy failed even to suggest, has been manifested in operation, rescuing multitudes from degradation and restoring them to holiness and to God. What philosophers could only dream of, as the privilege of the select few, Jesus Christ has manifested in His life as the property of all. Plato came to the conclusion that, if ever men were to be virtuous, they must be trained to it, but he could only sigh after the institution which could effect such a training. Jesus Christ formed the idea of the kingdom of God, but with Him it was no mere idea. He instituted the Catholic Church, which, of all human institutions, has created the mightiest influence for good. "What then is the only possible inference? That the Galilean peasant must have possessed a greatness above that of all the great men of the past and of the present united; that He stands in a position among men which is unique; in other words, that a superhuman power must have manifested itself in Him." It is well to remember that Jesus Christ *claimed* to be more than the philosophers, and therefore, if the claim He made is substantiated, He must have been more. "He declared that He was the Christ; that He is the supreme legislator in the kingdom of God, that His utterances are oracles from heaven; that He has power on earth to forgive sins; that He possesses a peculiar and exclusive knowledge of the Father; that all things are committed into His hands; that He possesses claims on the self-sacrifice of His followers more powerful than can be asserted by any earthly ties; that He will be the Judge of quick and dead; that in this capacity He will accept works of love done to others as having been rendered to Himself; that He can open the gates of Paradise; and finally, that He came to give His life a ransom for many. All these things, and much more besides, He certainly claims; and who can venture to affirm that the claims of Him who, during eighteen centuries, has afforded verifiable proof that He has been the light of the world and the light of life, are not just?"

We may refer, in concluding this argument, to the philosophical

work, "Ecce Homo," which cannot be charged with any undue Christian bias, and yet powerfully exhibits the unique character of Christ's teaching and mission. Speaking of the claim which was made by the Lord, to found and legislate for a new theocratic society, and to be the Judge of mankind, the author says (chap. v.): "When we contemplate this scheme as a whole, and glance at the execution and results of it, three things strike us with astonishment. *First*, its prodigious originality, if the expression may be used. What other man had the courage or elevation of mind to say, 'I will build up a state by the mere force of my will, without help from the kings of the world, without taking advantage of any of the secondary causes which unite men together—unity of interest or speech, or blood relationship. I will make laws for my state which shall never be repealed, and I will defy all the powers of destruction that are at work in the world to destroy what I build!' *Secondly*, we are astonished at the calm confidence with which the scheme was carried out. The reason why statesmen can seldom work on this vast scale is, that it commonly requires a whole lifetime to gain that ascendency over their fellow-men which such schemes presuppose. Some of the leading organizers of the world have said: 'I will work my way to supreme power, and then I will execute great plans!' But Christ overleaped the first stage altogether. He did not work His way to royalty, but simply said to all men: 'I am your King!' He did not struggle forward to a position in which He could found a new state, but simply founded it. *Thirdly*, we are astonished at the prodigious success of the scheme. It is not more certain that Christ presented Himself to men as the founder, legislator, and judge of a Divine society, than it is certain that men have accepted Him in these characters, that the Divine society has been founded, that it has lasted nearly two thousand years, that it has extended over a large and the most civilized portion of the earth's surface, and that it continues full of vigour at the present day."[1]

[1] Pp. 41–2. 8vo Edition.

CHAPTER V.

MIRACLES.

WE have already made some remarks on the subject of miracles, with a view to clear away confusion before entering on the Christian argument. But we must now give a closer attention to those so-called supernatural, or preternatural, or superhuman, facts, the record of which forms so large a portion of the Scriptures, and the belief in which seems to be so much identified with Christian faith. The general term "*miracles*" includes under it a considerable variety of Scripture facts, and the words which are employed by the sacred writers, both in the Old and New Testaments, have different shades of meaning, although they would all seem to coincide in the one idea, underlying them, of an appeal to man, by means of an external event, to receive a message, or to bow to Divine authority more or less directly manifested. In one case the word employed expresses simply the *wonderfulness* of the event: פֶּלֶא from פָּלָא to be wonderful; in Greek, *θαυμάσιον*; in Latin, *miraculum*. In another case the event is regarded as pointing to something beyond itself: אוֹת *σημεῖον*, *signum*, *portentum*. The word used, again, may denote the event as something which natural laws will not explain: מוֹפֵת *τέρας*, *prodigium*, an abnormal fact. Or the idea of a supernatural agent exercising power may be uppermost, the event being regarded as a work: גְּבוּרָה *δύναμις*, or מִפְעָלָה from פָּעַל to do; or, more fully, מִפְעֲלוֹת יְהוָה *ἔργα τοῦ Θεοῦ*, or simply *ἔργα*. The general conception of a miracle, as a fact over against the laws of Nature, whether as a suspension or violation of those laws, is altogether

outside of the view presented in Scripture, where the agency of God among the facts and phenomena of the external world is regarded as unceasing. There is no such contrast in the minds of the writers as the natural and supernatural. The personality of God and the immediate revelation of His personal will in the salvation of man, is the presupposition of all Scripture. The ancient Jews certainly believed in miracles, because to them it was a first truth that God was personally acting in all things; and as the universe rested on His will, they could find no more difficulty in believing that, at a certain time and place, He wrought a work, by which He manifested His presence and authority, than that "in the beginning God made the heavens and the earth." We are not, of course, concerned here to vindicate from objections every individual miracle of the Old Testament. Certain it is that the books were written by those who accepted the miraculous, as both possible and historically testified. In the early Christian Church the view taken of miracles was very similar. Miracles were extraordinary manifestations of the Divine. The conception of *Nature* as a sphere of law, and of miracles as outside that sphere, or as breaking into it, was at that time unknown. Augustine would seem to have anticipated, in some degree, the modern objections, but his view was based upon the universal agency of God, which to him was a sufficient explanation of a miracle. "We say that all portents are contrary to Nature; but they are not so. For how is that contrary to Nature which happens by the will of God, since the will of so mighty a Creator is certainly the nature of each created thing? A portent, therefore, happens, not contrary to Nature, but contrary to what we know of Nature." "Let not the sceptics benight themselves in this knowledge of the nature of things, as if Divine Power cannot bring to pass in an object anything else than what their own experience has shown them to be in its nature. Even the very things which are most commonly known as natural would not be less wonderful, nor less effectual to excite surprise in all who behold them, if men were not accustomed to admire no-

thing but what is rare."[1] This view of the universe, as resting on the Divine will, prevailed all through the time of the Christian Fathers, and down to a comparatively modern period. The doubts which shook the belief in the miraculous were the outgrowth of the modern scientific spirit, the effect of a closer and more orderly study of the phenomena of the material universe, and of the impression made upon the human mind by the discovery of laws, which seemed illimitable in their application, both in time and space.

In the writings of the schoolmen, in whom the philosophy of Aristotle and Plato was employed to defend the dogmatic positions of the Church, something like an attempt was made to treat of miracles from the orthodox point of view. Thomas Aquinas put forth many profound thoughts on the subject, though never in a speculative spirit. He distinguished the different kinds of miracles, as thus:—1. "Si quid divinitus fit, quod Natura nunquam facere potest, ut quod sol et retrocedit et stat. 2. Si Deus aliquid facit, quod Natura facere potest, sed non per illum ordinem. 3. Quum Deus facit, quod consuetum est fieri operatione Naturæ, tamen absque principiis naturæ operantibus, ut quum pluit sine operatione principium Naturæ." There may be a supernatural operation of Divine power in Nature, says Aquinas, "which is above it, and yet not contrary to it." In order that the course of Nature should not really be disturbed or destroyed, we must suppose a "miraculum restitutionis quo naturæ leges restituuntur."[2] Such a position, it is evident, is simply religious, not scientific. The will of God is regarded as underlying and controlling Nature, and, if necessary, putting it aside for a time and restoring it, like a manufacturer substituting one machine for another. In this view the dogmatic writers of the Reformation, and the period which followed it, mainly acquiesced. At the same time,

[1] "De Civitate Dei," xxi. 8. (See similar observations in the "Sermons on John," Tractate viii.)

[2] See Maurice: "History of Philosophy," vol. iii. pp. 190-2. First Edition.

a *miracle* was distinguished from a *wonder*, and the two kinds of events were placed in two different relations to the supernatural. The *wonder* is "*an event which appeals to man's limited knowledge for the sake of a providential purpose;*" the *miracle* is "*a distinct revelation of the immediate supernatural agency of God.*" "The word miracle," says Dr. Hodge, "was used in the Church in a very loose sense. Anything wonderful, anything for which the proximate cause could not be discovered, and anything in which Divine agency was specially indicated, was called a miracle." Conversion itself was called by Martin Luther the greatest of miracles. And it was common in the theological writers of the scholastic and Reformation periods to speak of miracles of nature and miracles of grace. The revival of the philosophical spirit which followed the dogmatic controversies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the speculative and critical tendency promoted by the discoveries of astronomical science, and the writings of Descartes and Spinoza, entirely changed the tone of thought on the subject of miracles. Their possibility and reality became matter of controversy. In Spinoza's "Tractatus Theologico-Politicus," (published anonymously, 1670), the sixth chapter is "De Miraculis." As a pantheist, the conception of the Divine Personality and will was to Spinoza an absurdity and contradiction. His view, and that of all pantheists, has been expressed by Strauss: "The government of the world is not the determination of events by an extra-mundane Intelligence, but by reason as immanent in the cosmical forces themselves and in their relations." The controversy is made to turn, therefore, on the existence of a Divine Personality, and becomes one between atheism and Theism, for pantheism is atheism. After the time of Spinoza the rejection of miracles became the common attitude assumed by rationalistic critics of the Scriptures. The possibility of a miracle has been denied, and their incredibility is the postulate of the whole school.

It is well that we should at this point clearly describe the kind of difficulty which we have to meet, in the Christian argu-

ment. We will, therefore, summarize the objections to miracles which have been brought against them by the rationalistic writers.[1]

I. Objections to miracles as inconsistent with the nature and character of God.

1. The assumption of a miracle separates the act of the Divine volition from the laws of Nature, and is opposed to those laws. God and Nature must be in agreement. If He should do anything which is contrary to the universal laws of Nature, He would contradict Himself as the Author of Nature.

2. It is not conceivable that God should appoint a certain order and then should violate that order.

3. It is unworthy of the Divine character to suppose that He corrects His own work of creation, which He would do by means of a miracle.

II. Objections to miracles on the side of man.

1. That which is subjectively inexplicable ought not to be assumed as objectively supernatural.

2. It was a mode of speech customary in ancient times, and particularly among the Hebrews, to pass over second causes, and refer everything to the immediate operation of the Divine power.

The whole of these objections fall to the ground when it is understood, that the right conception of a miracle does not traverse, in the least degree, the conception of Nature, as the realm of law and order; that the mystery which is involved in it is not to be solved either by the supposition of an agency above or against Nature, or arbitrary in its operation. It is sufficient if it be granted that the agency, whatever it is, is not discoverable by us as proceeding from any known law of Nature, and, being connected with a Divine purpose or moral antecedent, serves a moral end.

The modern objection to miracles proceeds on the assumption, for it cannot be more than an assumption, that there is an absolute uniformity and invariability throughout Nature, that

[1] See Luthardt: "Dogmatik."

a phenomenon is a link in an endless chain of antecedents and consequents, and to suppose it taken out of its place is to suppose it not the same phenomenon, but a different one. "To constitute a miracle," says Mr. J. S. Mill,[1] "a phenomenon must take place without having been preceded by any antecedent phenomenal conditions sufficient again to reproduce it; or a phenomenon for the production of which the antecedent conditions existed, must be arrested or prevented without the intervention of any phenomenal antecedents which would arrest or prevent it in a future case. The test of a miracle is: Were there present in the case such external conditions, such second causes, we may call them, that wherever these conditions or causes reappear the event will be reproduced? If there were, it is not a miracle; if there were not, it is a miracle, but it is not according to law; it is an event produced without, or in spite of, law. It will perhaps be said that a miracle does not necessarily exclude the intervention of second causes. If it were the will of God to raise a thunderstorm by miracle, He might do it by means of winds and clouds. Undoubtedly; but the winds and clouds were either sufficient when produced to excite the thunderstorm without other Divine assistance, or they were not. If they were not, the storm is not a fulfilment of law, but a violation of it. If they were sufficient, there is a miracle, but it is not the storm; it is the production of the winds and clouds, or whatever link in the chain of causation it was at which the influence of physical antecedents was dispensed with. If that influence was never dispensed with, but the event called miraculous was produced by natural means, and those again by others, and so on from the beginning of things; if the event is no otherwise the act of God than in having been foreseen and ordained by Him as the consequence of the forces put in action at the creation, then there is no miracle at all, nor anything different from the ordinary working of God's providence."

Now here it will be evident that the supposed miracle is

[1] "Essays on Religion," p. 22

regarded simply as a physical event; as, *e.g.*, the healing of a disease, the calming of a storm, or the sudden production of a change in the elements of any kind. If the forces and laws already in Nature are employed to produce the effect in question, then, Mr. Mill affirms, it is not a miracle, because there is nothing acting as an efficient cause but such forces and laws of Nature; but plainly, if there be such an ordering of these natural forces and laws at a given moment as to produce the effect of a miracle on the minds of the observers, then the miracle has done its work, explain it how we may. To say, it is nothing more than the ordinary working of God's providence, is to deny the facts, for the effect is an extraordinary effect. If the wind which blew back the Red Sea and gave the Israelites a safe passage across were a true consequent of natural antecedents, it would be none the less a miracle in the Bible sense of the word, that the action of the wind should correspond exactly in time and place with the purpose of God towards His people. But there are many miracles recorded in Scripture to which such an argument is totally inapplicable. Take, *e.g.*, the case of raising the dead. The resurrection of Christ is the crucial instance of the miraculous. Here we cannot talk of antecedents and consequents. There is no parallel in the uniform successions of Nature. A human body is dead. The uniform succession would be corruption and dissolution. But here is a new fact. Instead of the succession being as before, there is an "arrest or prevention," and it is impossible for us to say what is the true antecedent to that arrest and prevention. It may be that the spiritual life, which was in Jesus before He died, was the true antecedent to the glorified life which followed death. It may be that that spiritual life arrested corruption, and prevented the operation of natural laws. But in our ignorance of the spiritual world, and in our imperfect knowledge of the material world, it is folly to say that there is no possibility that the dead shall rise. All we can say is, that wherever the antecedents of corruption are unarrested and act uniformly, then the consequents will be as we know

them. Or take another instance, which seems to be closer to the scientific position. At a word, or at a touch, a disease is healed, a physical defect, such as blindness or deafness, is supplied. There is certainly no possibility, according to natural law, that the mere agitation of the air by the human voice, or the contact of one human being with another by touch, should produce an entirely new physiological fact or condition. But it is not at all *inconceivable* that there should be forces and laws not at present known to us, but connecting the spiritual and material worlds together, which may be called into operation at a word, or pass as by a channel through the nervous system of one human being to another. It is not for us to say that this is the rationale of the miracle. It is sufficient that we can conceive a possible explanation. Many of the most wonderful phenomena of human life are indications of the action of the spiritual world upon the material, and many are so isolated and extraordinary in their character that we cannot reduce them to any law or regard them as links in chains of antecedents and consequents. The rationalists, when they first commenced their attacks on the miracles of Scripture, made themselves a laughing-stock by their attempts to assign secondary causes for events which they were compelled to admit were historical to some extent. The mythical theory of Strauss was a waste of ingenuity which simply recoiled upon its author. The antecedents of the gospel narrative were shown to have been very different from what the sceptic suggested. There are the miracles. Either they describe historical facts, and then they must be treated in a scientific spirit as requiring to be accounted for as facts; or else they must be proved unhistorical. The attack on the trustworthiness of the narratives has broken down. The stress of the argument, therefore, must bear upon the *possibility and antecedent probability of a miracle.* Let us now take up this vital question, for if it can be shown that there is no rational ground on which the possibility of a miracle can be denied, and the connection between the miraculous events and the setting in which we find

them is such that we may see their harmony with the undoubted facts of revelation, and with the moral and spiritual principles which support their antecedent probability, then the whole burden of argument for the Christian advocate is transferred to external evidence, and he has simply to show that the testimony of the witnesses is credible.

The two essential factors in the idea of a miracle, as was observed by the schoolmen long ago, are: 1. The immediate or quasi-immediate action of God. 2. The connection of the external event with a moral or spiritual order, of which it forms a part. The mere appearance of the wonderful or supernatural event, or phenomenon, does not constitute a proper miracle, for in that case every prodigy in Nature would be a miracle. There must be the place of the wonderful event in the moral order. So when we are pointed to so-called miracles in modern times, we may fairly demand that a true reason for the miracle must be assigned. It is not enough to say the power to work miracles still remains in the Church, for it may be replied, that when the revelation of truth has been fully given, and the kingdom of God has been established as a fact in the earth, the exercise of such a power must be a superfluous thing. At least, it is incumbent upon the worker of the miracle, not merely to show that the event is supernatural, but that he is commissioned of God to work it; that the time, place, and character of the event are all such as approve it to be a work of God. It is difficult, however, so to define a miracle as to satisfy the various applications of the word and to bring under it all the supernatural facts of the Bible. Dr. Christlieb, in his "Modern Doubt and Christian Belief," rightly says that there are two senses of the word *Miracle*. The wider sense is that in which it represents all that is extraordinary, of which the origin is still concealed, in which sense it is employed of God's work in creation and providence. The narrower sense of the word, which is that in which it is employed of events connected with the mission and teaching of Divine messengers, may be thus defined:—

"Unique and extraordinary manifestations of Divine power which influence Nature in a manner incomprehensible to our empirical knowledge, but always in accordance with some moral or spiritual end;" or, more exactly, "Creative acts of God, *i.e.*, supernatural exertions of power upon certain points of Nature's domain, through which, by virtue of His own might already working in the course of Nature, God, for the furtherance of His kingdom, brings forth some new thing which natural substances or causalities could not have produced by themselves, but which (and this must not be overlooked), as soon as they have taken place, range themselves in the natural course of things, without any disturbance arising on their account."

It will be observed here that the view of a miracle which scientific sceptics resist, and which David Hume combated, as we shall see presently, in his celebrated argument, is not the correct view. Miracles are neither a violation, nor a supersession, nor a suspension of the laws of Nature; nor are they a higher law called in to overrule or absorb the action of a lower law. A miracle is simply the revelation, by means of an event, of the Divine in action. There are different kinds of law in the universe. There is physical law, moral law, spiritual law. In the realm of physical law we should not look for a miracle, but in the realm of moral and spiritual law we may expect one; and seeing that these realms of law are not mutually exclusive but concentric, it follows that that which must necessarily be, in the moral world, will reveal itself in the physical. It has been often remarked, that there is an analogy with the miraculous, in the free action of human volition upon the material world. In a certain sense, the free will of man breaks in upon the successions of phenomena in Nature, not indeed by the introduction of that which is supernatural, but by the free origination of a new order of events. By the law of gravitation a stone is falling. By the free action of the human will that fall is interrupted. Physical laws are in operation both in the stone and in the hand; but what is it that originates

the mental impulse, setting in motion a new series of antecedents and consequents? Consciousness affirms my freedom. May I not, then, challenge the objector to the miraculous to prove that, if there be a personal God, He is not equally free to act, not indeed against His own laws or apart from them, but in an analogous manner to my own action upon Nature, producing effects which may be manifestations of His presence and proofs of His authority, just as human actions are of the individual man from whom they take their beginning. It has been pointed out by many, and by Christlieb, Beyschlag, and others in modern times, with great clearness, that the main stress of the argument for miracles must lie on the proof of a moral order in the universe to which the physical arrangements, which seem for a time to be disturbed, are subservient. "Miracles," says Christlieb, "presuppose man estranged from God, and a depraved course of Nature, and they aim at the restoration, salvation, and consummation of the world. They only break through the laws of Nature in order to raise her from her imperfection and bondage, to the freedom and glory which was her original aim. They are isolated manifestations of a new creative activity of the Divine Will, infusions of a reorganizing power into the life of Nature, whereby it is agitated and excited. This holy purpose lies, without exception, at the foundation of all true miracles, and in this especially consists the difference between the scriptural and apocryphal miracles. Hence miracles in Scripture are so often called *signs*. They are always signs of the Divine intention, which aims at the salvation of the world, tokens that God has not abandoned the high destiny for which He created it, and pledges that He is bringing it nearer and nearer to this destiny in spite of all hindrances, and that He will at length redeem His word, "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. xxi. 5).[1]

One of the chief arguments employed against the possibility of miracles is the uniformity of Nature, the absolute univer-

[1] "Modern Doubt and Christian Belief," pp. 315–16.

sality of law. But it is really a contradiction to talk of the absolute universality of law, in the merely physical sense of causation. The conception of antecedents and consequents must be relative and not absolute. How can there be an absolute universality of the chain of cause and effect? Must not the chain have a *primum mobile*, a first moving cause? Must there not be a *natura naturans*, as well as a *natura naturata?* The true conception of the universe cannot be that of the solitary reign of law. It must be law, together with the lawgiver, and the law upholder.

Professor Rogers, in his "Eclipse of Faith," has an interesting and suggestive chapter with the ironical title, "That Miracles are Impossible, but that it is Impossible to Prove it," in which he employs, with great force, the argument from creation. "If we admit creation we admit a miracle, and if there was one stupendous miracle in the origin of things, why doubt other lesser miracles in the course of things?" This, it must be admitted, has great relevancy to the question, Can the Divine Personality act freely? But the objection to the miraculous has been somewhat modified by that peculiar form of pantheistic philosophy which is now prevailing, which would rest in the idea of a continually developing universe, and therefore sees in a miracle an inconceivable break in the line of continuity. The question of the miracle then becomes somewhat differently expressed. If the continuity of development be admitted, yet, may there not be the introduction of facts, from time to time, in the history of the world, which are not either *against* or *apart from* the line of natural development, but which are the *normal manifestations*, in that line, of a moral and spiritual force, appearing in its appointed order, but not capable of being anticipated by human reason. Just as a river flowing on continuously, by the same force of gravitation, from its sources to the ocean, may here and there along its course, give off a portion of its waters to fertilise a district, into which they are diverted by special artificial means, and is still the same river to the end, although, left to itself, it would

never have fulfilled the special purpose, so we can easily conceive that, from time to time, the succession of antecedents and consequents in the line of physical causation should be, not suspended, not superseded, not interrupted, but simply drawn aside, into another succession of causes and effects, of which we know nothing by mere human reason, but which is thus revealed to us as fact, through its connection with the course of Nature.

The tendency of modern thought is to trace all phenomena to a rigid line of development; but just as it is impossible to deny that there is multiplicity developed from unity, so it can scarcely be doubted that the course of development is not a perfectly straight line. But the theory of development is at present very little more than a generalisation, from indeed a large number of facts, but which awaits confirmation, which cannot be a fixed standard of reference. Moreover, in view of the *abnormal*, which is distinctly recognised in the theory of development as having its function in Nature, it would be unreasonable to reject the mere abstract conception of a miracle. It is admitted that the *nisus* of Nature in seeking its end, may throw out, from time to time, forms which are not harmonious with the strict line of development; hence the appearance of monstrosities. Why, then, may we not believe that there is another *nisus*, a moral and spiritual *nisus*, which reveals itself, at intervals, along the course of physical succession? If science, under the guidance of the principle of evolution, denies that the irregular is a contradiction of law, or an evidence of lawlessness, so we may deny that the miraculous is either unnatural or incredible. Nature seeks a physical equilibrium. Miracles are the evidence of another tendency in the universe, the tendency to moral equilibrium. The higher order is coming forth out of the chaos. Human nature is being developed upwards towards the spiritual. Is there not then a border-land between the physical and the spiritual, in which there are occurrences which partake of the nature of both?

Again, consider these two principles,—*the universality of*

law and *the uniformity of Nature.* Both these generalisations are imperfectly proved. They cannot be more than generalisations from an induction, which, though it may represent the whole human race and the whole extent of time, is still finite and incomplete. We are reasoning on an assumption in proceeding from a limited experience to the idea of the universe. We may *instinctively believe* in the universality of law and the uniformity of Nature, but our instinctive faith may have to be corrected, our interpretation of it may be erroneous. Looking at individual laws of Nature, it is impossible to prove that any one is absolutely universal; nor, indeed, could we *à priori* prove that an individual fact may not be absolutely unique, isolated, an exception to all law, a manifestation of the free will of the Creator, outside the sphere of the ordained successions of natural phenomena. Indeed it is admitted by Mr. Herbert Spencer, Mr. J. S. Mill, and others of the positivists, that the abstract possibility of a miracle cannot be denied. Dr. Carpenter, whose scientific eminence and philosophical caution no one will dispute, thus expresses his own view of the *à priori* question in the *Contemporary Review* for Jan., 1876: "The scientific Theist, who regards the so-called 'Laws of Nature' as nothing else than man's expressions of so much of the Divine order as it lies within his power to discern, and who looks at the uninterruptedness of this order as the highest evidence of its original perfection, need find (as it seems to me) no abstract difficulty in the conception, that the Author of Nature can, if He will, occasionally depart from it. And hence, as I deem it presumptuous to deny that there might be occasions which, in His wisdom, may require such departure, I am not conscious of any such scientific 'prepossession' against miracles as would prevent me from accepting them as facts, if trustworthy evidence of their reality could be adduced. The question with me, therefore, is simply, Have we any adequate historical ground for the belief that such departure has ever taken place?" It is, in fact, only the pantheist or atheist that can consistently deny the possibility of a miracle. Granted the personality of God, His freedom,

His creative omnipotence, and infinite goodness, and it is quite conceivable that He should work miracles.

But are miracles antecedently probable? This question can only be answered in view of another. *Is revelation a fact?* If there is a course of Divine communications to man, and if, in order to make those communications what the wisdom and benevolence of God ordain them to be, miracles are necessary, then the fact that God is speaking to man renders it antecedently probable that miracles will be performed. However irrational they might be proved to be, on the simply natural ground, on the moral ground they are both reasonable and probable. They are introduced in the sacred narrative in connection with the course of revelation, and it is in their relation to that history of revelation that they must be looked at, as morally fitting and necessary. The remarks of Mr. Conder, in his "Basis of Faith," on this subject, are judicious and apt, and will illustrate the position which we are claiming for miracles, as part of the scheme of revelation. After speaking of the history of the Bible "as being in its essence the history of the revelation of God to mankind," Mr. Conder observes: "If that history be true, this revelation has had certain grand stages or epochs of progressive illumination, each having reference to the general state of mankind, by which the Jewish people, or a certain portion of them, were trained to become the religious teachers of the world. At each of these epochs miracles come into the foreground, but not miracles of the same character. The specific character, physical and moral, of each group is as exactly suited to its own stage of revelation as it would be misplaced in any other. We cannot imagine the miracles of the Exodus wrought anywhere but in Egypt, by any prophet but Moses, or with any purpose but that ascribed to them, of prostrating in ignominious ruin the gods of Egypt, and delivering Israel as the people of Jehovah by an unmistakable exercise of Divine power. The miracles of the desert,—the manna, the water from the rock, the giving of the law, the judgments on the rebellious,—had all one aim,

to teach the fundamental lesson of religion, that the God who had saved them from their tyrants, who was forming them into a nation, and who required from them absolute obedience, trust, and love, was no mere national deity, but the Creator of the universe, the God of all human spirits, the only living and true God. These miracles would have been as much out of place morally in any other epoch, as physically in any other place or circumstances. The group of miracles, again, gathering round the ministry of Elijah and Elisha, miracles both of judgment and of mercy, are appropriate to the exact place assigned to them, as a testimony to the mission of inspired Protestant reformers in the midst of national apostacy. Equally appropriate were the miracles of the Captivity,—the fiery furnace, the writing on the wall, the lions' den,—to that crisis in the life of the chosen people when, doomed for seventy years to national death, they were yet destined to emerge unconsumed from the furnace, to rise as from the grave to rebuild their Temple and city, and to see the doom of prophecy fulfilled upon their oppressors. Lastly, the miracles ascribed to Jesus have a character uniquely their own. Some few of them remarkably resemble some of those recorded of Elijah and Elisha, though on a vaster scale. But when the disciples wished to have one of Elijah's miracles of judgment repeated, they were rebuked, as utterly misinterpreting the spirit of the new dispensation. Jesus performed no miracles of judgment, nor yet any addressed to the nation and its rulers, like Samuel's thunderstorm or Elijah's famine. His miracles dealt with men's private life, with their homes, their wants, their sins, their sufferings. They presented Jesus as the Saviour and Friend, not of the nation but of individuals, and invited personal faith in Him. You can no more imagine the miracles of Christ wrought by any former prophets, than you can imagine the thunder and fiery terror of Sinai accompanying the Sermon on the Mount, or the earth cleaving beneath Caiaphas, Herod, and Pontius Pilate, and entombing them like Korah and his fellow rebels." This moral fitness of the individual miracles to the place where we find

them, is a testimony on their behalf as historical facts. And if when they were wrought they were morally necessary, then they harmonize with the purpose of revelation, and are included in it, and therefore are as antecedently probable as revelation itself, which is included in the character of God and His relation to His creatures. As to the relation of the miracles to law, there is no necessity to suppose them lawless because they are supernatural. There is a teleological law which pervades the universe. We cannot conceive the presiding mind without such a law. "God's world-plan, though comprehending the supernatural, will be an exact and perfect system of order, centred in the eternal unity of reason about the last end. It is not necessary that we should be able to conceive how such supernatural laws operate, or what they are. All we need is to find the possible and probable fact, which, having found, we can as little doubt or dismiss the conviction of some presiding law as we can the faith of universal laws in Nature, where we do not know the laws or cannot discover the secret of their action. We know in general what is the law of miracles, viz., that they are wrought as attestations of a Divine mission in those by whom they are wrought. But their particular occasions, times, and properties, why wrought by this one and not by another, why at one time or in one age and not in succeeding ages, we may not be able to discover. The law is beyond our investigation, but that there is a law, and that exactly the same miracles will be wrought, if wrought at all, in exactly the same conditions or spiritual connections, even to eternity, we have no more reason to doubt than we have to question God's intelligence."[1] Positivism itself requires of us that we humbly sit at the feet of all phenomena, whether physical or spiritual, and endeavour to trace them to their laws. It is utterly unphilosophical and unscientific, either to reject miracles as *à priori* impossible, or to refuse to study the miraculous phenomena presented to us in the sacred writings and endeavour to bring them into something like moral

[1] Bushnell, p. 208.

order. Either they are unhistorical, and the testimony for them is insufficient to prove their objective reality, or admitting that there were phenomena in the real world which could be so described by witnesses, there must be sought some explanation of them which can be accepted, as both rationally and morally credible.

Before passing on to the last branch of the argument, which regards the miracles as matters of testimony, it will be well to recount some of the most familiar hypotheses which have been put forward to render the conception of the miracle intelligible. If the *à priori* objection to miracles be removed, and the testimony be admitted as irrefragable, we may either accept the facts as supernatural facts, without attempting to bring them into any rational relation with accepted theories of Nature, or we may suggest modes of accommodation by which we may reconcile the known and the unknown. The following are some of the hypotheses which have been held on the subject :—

1. It has been suggested that as particular miracles, such as the destruction of the Assyrian army of Sennacherib, are declared in Scripture to have been effected through the instrumentality of an angel, we may refer all miraculous works to angelic agency, authorized and commanded by God, working invisibly, but by the use of natural powers. With this may be connected the doctrine held by some, that all the material forces and operations of Nature are under the subordinate control and government of spiritual beings, who sway them in the fulfilment of direct Divine behests. That some such view was commonly held among the Jews may be gathered from much of the language of the Old Testament, especially the Psalms. But while it may serve to enforce the sentiments of piety, it will be evident, when it is viewed in the light of reason, that it relieves no philosophical difficulty : " Qui facit per alium facit per se." The question is still the same, How are the miracles reconcilable with the order of Nature ; how do angels work them ?

2. It was the view held by the elder Rabbis, and tradition-

ally preserved among the Jews, as we learn from Maimonides, that in the original scheme of the universe provision was made beforehand, by which such events as miracles could be introduced, at the time and place fitted to them. What kind of provision, is not defined. If it be a law of Nature, then there is no need to call it a special provision. If it be part of the original constitution of Nature, what is it but a law of Nature? Malebranche and Dr. Samuel Clarke held a view somewhat similar to this, distinguishing causes into regular or usual causes and occasional causes, a distinction which is more in name than in conception, for the mere rarity of the agency in operation cannot affect the causative principle. The real difficulty is to conceive a phenomenon out of the succession of phenomena to which it appears related. Whence comes it in the family of facts in which it appears? To refer it to an occasional cause is a simple *petitio principii*, it puts the same difficulty under another form.

3. Looking upon the universe as everywhere and always the realm of law, it has been suggested that miracles may be due to the action of higher laws in the region of lower laws. This is the view put forward by Archbishop Trench in his work on "The Miracles," p. 15: "The true miracle is a higher and purer nature, coming down out of the world of untroubled harmonies into this world of ours, which so many discords have jarred and disturbed; and bringing them back again, though it is for one mysterious prophetic moment, into harmony with that higher. We should term the miracle, not an infraction of a law, but behold in it a lower law neutralized, and for a time put out of working by a higher; and of this abundant analogous examples are evermore going forward before our eyes. Continually we behold in the world around us lower laws held in restraint by higher, mechanic by dynamic, chemical by vital, physical by moral." This view requires more caution in the statement. If it is meant that the miracle is the sign or revelation of a force at work, not included in the ordinary natural forces which we observe by the use of ordinary faculties, then

it is little more than saying that the miracle is the sign of the action of Divine power, which is undoubtedly the accepted view of all believers. But we gain nothing by the confusion of language introduced when we speak of higher laws coming down into lower. Laws do not act of themselves. They are simply the rational method of conceiving the action of forces. What those forces really are it is impossible for us to say. A miracle, if a fact, is the sign of a force in operation. What it is, how it works, we cannot say. "We are only encumbering the question with needless difficulties when we introduce into our conception of a miracle some theory as to the mode of the Divine action in its performance. It is clear that there is not the smallest necessity to affirm that the performance of one must involve either a directly creative act of God, or a violation or suspension of the action of any law or force in Nature. The only thing necessary to the conception of a miracle is that it should be some manifestation of the Divine activity which exhibits special purpose on the part of God; and the only thing necessary for its performance is the active operation or the combination of such forces as are adequate to accomplish it."[1]

4. Another suggestion, which, however, affords the Reason little relief, is, that while the original forces of Nature are preserved completely unchanged, undisturbed, and unsuspended, the method of their operation is modified at a particular time and place, by the will of God, for the special purpose involved in the miracle. Until the change in operation is more definitely conceived, it will be evident that this view is vague and unphilosophical.

5. Some have ventured to propound the theory of *suspension.* The laws and forces of Nature are not violated, not changed, but their action is simply *suspended,* to allow of the introduction of an extra-mundane force. This of course includes the view just described (No. 3), that a higher law or force intervenes among the lower. But the scientific difficulty is left untouched.

[1] Row: Bampton Lectures, p. 67.

How can a law be suspended without the destruction of all laws, without chaos; for are not all laws interdependent, and is not the cosmos a unity? Suspension of law is violation of law.

6. While all hypotheses as to the *modus operandi* of the Divine Being must be unverifiable and therefore a mere waste of words, it may be allowed us to look at miracles as revelations of the hidden, and to conjecture what that is of which they are the signs. The laws of Nature are not suspended, not violated, but in miracles we may trace the partial revelation and dim anticipation of an order of the universe which is hereafter to be fully manifested. We cannot know it now except as we observe it though these chinks and crevices in the order of the material universe. There may come a time, said Jean Paul Richter, when "*Miracles will be Nature;*" that is, when such occurrences as we now denominate miraculous, will not be the unusual and the startling, but the regular and the ordinary. We cannot conceive such a state without the conception of the present order of things being radically changed. But there is much in Scripture which seems to point to such a changed order. Individual miracles in the Bible may not be relevant to such an hypothesis, but it is an acknowledged principle that the miracles must not be dealt with as all standing on the same level. *The miraculous* in general, and the *greatest* of the miracles in particular, point to a kingdom of God, yet to be fully revealed, but the promise of which, and its anticipatory operation in human history, are the substance of that Divine revelation which from beginning to end is filled with the evidence of "*things not seen*," the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

We now pass on to the last, and practically the most important, portion of the subject of miracles. *The abstract possibility*, we have seen, cannot be disputed. *The antecedent probability* that miracles would be included in revelation must be admitted to be considerable. "Before we can have ground for raising what can, with any propriety, be called an *argument* from analogy for or against revelation, considered as somewhat

miraculous, we must be acquainted with a similar or parallel case. But the history of some other world, seemingly in like circumstances with our own, is no more than a parallel case; and therefore nothing short of this can be so."[1] We must, therefore, be content to look at the facts as they stand, and inquire if they warrant our belief in their miraculous character. Here, again, the question will arise, Can any amount of evidence of an historical character prove the truth of a miracle? Is not the presumption against them as miracles so great that no amount of testimony can overcome it, and the balance of reason will be against accepting the history? Now we may appeal, in reply, to the consideration which Butler has introduced, that *any extraordinary* fact has a very strong presumption against it until it is proved. (See the same argument wrought out with great force by Archbishop Whately in his "Historic doubts of the existence of Napoleon Buonaparte.") We must not compare miracles with the common, ordinary events of human history. We might not anticipate them. But the extraordinary, and the highly improbable, continually happens. If it be admitted that a miracle might occur, because it is possible, that the undoubted fact that there is a Divine revelation of moral truth given to man makes it probable that in the giving of that revelation such supernatural facts should be included, then we are bound to examine the historical evidence of the miracles without prejudice, with a feeling of anticipation that some such events will be recorded.

It will be well, at this point, to state the argument of David Hume on the balance of probabilities, which is really the only attack on the credibility of miracles worthy of being called philosophical. The general principle on which Hume proceeds in his argument is thus stated in his own words.[2] "*That no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavours to establish. And even in that case there is a*

[1] Butler. [2] "Essay on Miracles," Pt. I.

mutual destruction of arguments, and the superior only gives us an assurance suitable to that degree of force which remains after deducting the inferior." In considering this argument, it is important to remember from what point of view a miracle is regarded by Hume. "A miracle," he says, "is a violation of the laws of Nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined." We have already seen that there is no need to bring against the idea of a miracle the uniformity of Nature's laws, because there is no reason to suppose that a miracle interferes with them or is irreconcilable with them. But take it as a phenomenon which is, so far as we can see, inexplicable by those laws, outside of them, not referable to them. Then the question is as Hume puts it, the miracle is accepted on the ground of testimony. Is it possible to find testimony for miracles which outweighs the improbability of the phenomenon simply as a phenomenon? Now it has been shown by Paley, at considerable length, that the testimony of the Christian writers for miracles—for they rested their whole faith on the supernatural—is of such a nature, and was so supported by the corresponding testimony of their lives, that to believe them either deceived or deceivers is a greater violation of probability, and contradiction of experience, than to believe a miracle. Testimony varies in different individuals and circumstances. The testimony of an indifferent person, who professed to witness a miracle, who had no interest in testifying to it, who suffered nothing as a witness for it, to whom it did not become a foundation of faith, would be of very little weight indeed, compared with the improbability of the event. But the testimony of one whose life took a new course from the miracle, who died to prove his faith, who was one of a number of witnesses whose evidence, taken as a whole, formed a compact body of proof, would be a testimony of immense strength. If the miracle itself is part of the system of religion which is accepted by the witness, then it must not be regarded as an

isolated event, but as included, as to its probability, in the religion. Is Christianity probable? This, we maintain, can be only tried on the basis of the whole question of revelation. Christianity is the outcome of the Divine procedure for ages, and stands on the firm foundation of the character of God and His dealings with man from the beginning. There is no improbability, therefore, in a miracle, if a miracle belong to Christianity as such, and it remains for the objector to prove that if a Divine revelation be given it would not include miracles.

Then, if we look to the testimony of the apostles and early Christians, it may fairly be asked, is it not more incredible that they should have been deceivers or deceived, than that the miracles were facts? Here we are brought face to face with the men and the Christian records. "When we consider," says Paley, at the beginning of the sixth chapter of his "Evidences of Christianity," "*first*, the preaching of the religion at this hour; *secondly*, the only credible account which can be given of its origin, namely, the activity of the Founder and His associates; *thirdly*, the opposition which that activity must naturally have excited; *fourthly*, the fate of the Founder of the religion, attested by heathen writers as well as our own; *fifthly*, the testimony of the same writers to the sufferings of Christians, either contemporary with, or immediately succeeding, the original settlers of the institution; *sixthly*, predictions of the sufferings of His followers ascribed to the Founder of the religion, which ascription alone proves, either that such predictions were delivered and fulfilled, or that the writers of Christ's life were induced by the event to attribute such predictions to Him; *seventhly*, letters now in our possession, written by some of the principal agents in the transaction, referring expressly to extreme labours, dangers, and sufferings, sustained by themselves and their companions; *lastly*, a history, purporting to be written by a fellow-traveller of one of the new teachers, and, by its unsophisticated correspondency with letters of that person now extant, proving itself to be written by

some one well acquainted with the subject of the narrative, which history contains accounts of travels, persecutions, and martyrdoms, answering to what the former reasons lead us to expect; when we lay together these considerations, which, taken separately, are, I think, correctly such as I have stated, there cannot remain much doubt in our minds but that a number of persons at that time appeared in the world, publicly advancing an extraordinary story, and, for the sake of propagating the belief of that story, voluntarily incurring great personal dangers, traversing seas and kingdoms, exerting great industry, and sustaining great extremities of ill usage and persecution. It is also proved that the same persons, in consequence of their persuasion, or pretended persuasion, of the truth of what they asserted, entered upon a course of life in many respects new and singular." Now these are the facts which we must identify with the testimony. To believe the testimony false, we must resist the evidence of these facts. Is not that, then, to resist more probability than when we accept the truth of a miracle, especially when we remember that a miracle *can* happen, and that if God is the God of love, and is giving man a revelation for his salvation, it is antecedently probable that a miracle will happen?

And here it is needful to remark, that it is altogether unfair to Christianity to put all miracles together in a mass as instances of the supernatural, and argue against them on the ground that they are inconsistent with the revelation of God's method in Nature. It has been a common shift of the unbeliever to disparage the Christian miracles by reference to those which are not only much less fully testified, but which have no weight of moral evidence in their character and fitness. The professed miracles of the middle ages, or of modern superstition, are not to be compared with those of the Christian Scriptures. Even though it should be the result of modern criticism that some of the narratives of the Old and New Testaments must be admitted to be doubtful, that could not apply to the one great central miracle, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, nor indeed to

the miracle of His supernatural character, as we have seen. Dr. Carpenter has said that he sees no more reason, as to many of the narratives in the Gospels, for believing them true, than he has for accepting narratives of similar miracles in the writings of the early Fathers. (See preface to Row's Bampton Lectures, pp. viii., ix.) But surely in this case he is putting out of sight the facts to which Paley has called attention, the character of the witnesses, their faith, and the results of their faith. But he goes on to say: "On the other hand, looking at the unquestionable fact—for such it appears to me—that the resurrection of our Lord was the foundation of the preaching of Paul and (so far as we know) of the other apostles, and was universally accepted by the early Church as the cardinal doctrine of Christianity ('If Christ be not raised, then is your faith vain'), the gospel narratives derive from that fact a support that is given to none other of the miracles either of Christ or His followers." This is valuable testimony from a very able and candid scientific man; but it is impossible to stop the argument short at that point. If the resurrection is testified, then Christianity is true. If Christianity is true, then Christians were not deceivers. Therefore they wrote what they wrote sincerely and faithfully. Then, how could they have been deceived in so many cases, cases capable of verification or exposure in their own days and subsequently? Moreover, if Christ rose from the dead, why could He not perform the miracles? The greater includes the less. The moral reasons are sufficient justification of the phenomena. The miracles are not isolated prodigies. They form a unity which is identified with the resurrection of Christ, and to break which is to destroy Christianity. (See this argument fully wrought out by Dr. Westcott in his "Gospel of the Resurrection.")

The actual triumph of Christianity in the second and third centuries, its continued progress, without pause, without retrocession, is a fact which cannot be explained without the admission that its commencement was accompanied with supernatural

attestation. "Unless," says Mr. Isaac Taylor,[1] "we allow the supernatural and the Divine to have belonged to Christianity at its rise, our alternative is to fill up the void by aid of some hypothesis which shall give an intelligible account of what we know to have followed wherever it was proclaimed throughout the Roman world. Remove from Christianity everything in it which is supernatural and Divine, and then the problem which we have to do with is this: A revolution in human affairs, in the highest degree beneficial in its import, was carried forward upon the arena of this great world, by means of the noble behaviour of men who command our sympathy and admiration, as brave, wise, and good. But this revolution drew the whole of its moral force from a belief which—how shall we designate it?—was in part an inexplicable illusion, in part a dream, and in part a fraud! This, the greatest forward movement which the civilized branches of the human family have ever made, took its rise in bewildered Jewish brains! Indestructible elements of advancement to which even infidel natures confessedly owe whatever is best and most hopeful within them, these elements of good, which were obtained for us at such a cost, had their source in a congeries of exaggerations and in a mindless conspiracy, hatched by chance, nursed by imposture, and winged by fanaticism."

Now the real force of the argument from testimony is not to be tested by abstract principles, as to the comparative weight of human testimony of any kind against the improbability of miracles, but by observing the connection between the testimony as it is given and the supernatural phenomena as involved in it. It is observed by Mr. Taylor[2] that the historical and the supernatural are not only side by side in the sacred writings, as though they were only superficially connected, but really intermingled with one another, and inseparable. They are connected not only by way of *adhesion*, but by way of *cohesion*. The writings of the Christian witnesses, found

[1] "Restoration of Belief," Part I.
[2] Ibid., Part II. p. 128.

in the New Testament, may be classified under three divisions : I. Those throughout the substance of which the historic base blends itself with the supernatural in the way of explicit and circumstantial narrative ; such as the Gospels and Acts. II. Those in which some affirmation of the supernatural occurs, but without circumstantial narrative ; as in seven of the Epistles. III. Those in which we find no affirmation of the supernatural, but in which it appears implicitly, though necessarily, in the primary article of the Christian profession, the resurrection of Christ; these are, fourteen of the Epistles. The Apocalypse may be disregarded in the argument, as not directly bearing on the historical facts of the gospel.

Now the first of these classes of Christian writings, which describe the miracles as such, may be put aside to be dealt with separately. The Epistles which directly affirm the supernatural may be also dismissed from the argument, as coming under the same category as the Gospels. There remain the fourteen Epistles which may be called the non-supernatural, in which there is only indirect allusion to miracles. These are : Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, James, 1, 2, and 3 John, and Jude. All these fourteen Epistles contain only indirect references to the supernatural. What are we to infer from this fact? *First:* That the apostolic writers did not employ miracles extravagantly and enthusiastically. "They were neither striving to bolster up their own confidence by incessant reference to miracles, nor endeavouring to sustain the constancy of their converts by any such means. Their habit was to allege miracles whenever there was any *direct* occasion to do so, not otherwise. In seven Epistles they do ; in fourteen they do not." *Second:* When an apostle writes to those who did not need any reference to supernatural authority, whose belief was a tranquil assurance, he makes no special allusion to miracles. When he defies adversaries, or rebukes faulty converts, or challenges an examination of his authority, then he takes his stand upon miracles, though he does not, even then, make a great deal of

the form of the miracle, but rests upon the substantial fact that it cannot be denied. The apostolic writers were very different from one another in character and temperament. While, therefore, there is the same fact in regard to their use of the supernatural to be observed in all, it cannot be attributed to any peculiarity of the individual. Miracles were never wrought without a valid reason, so, in like manner, they were never mentioned in the sacred writings without a sufficient cause. The documents of primitive Christianity clearly show that Christianity rests upon the supernatural vitally and essentially. As this argument is one of great moral force, we give the substance of Mr. Taylor's examination of the apostolic writings. We take up—

1. *The Epistle of Jude.* It signifies but little whether or not we may be able to prove that this Epistle is apostolic. It is plainly contemporary with apostles, or of a little later date. It is a genuine document of the Christianity of the first century. Even if it should be granted to be a forgery and mere imitation at a later period, the argument is not injured. We learn from this Epistle that there were Christian observances, such as the Agapæ, which already were subject to abuse; that there were evil-minded men already corrupting Christian doctrine, such as the free remission of sin. Against such moral dangers, what is the defence? Not merely moral teaching. An appeal to the authority of a religion which was evidently regarded by the writer as resting on the supernatural. This is the tone of the whole writing, and comes out especially in the majestic doxology with which it concludes: "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." (ver. 24, 5.)

2. *The Epistle of James.* This is somewhat similar in character. It breathes an uncompromising moral intensity, and abounds in sharp rebukes of that sanctimoniousness

which was the prominent characteristic of the Jewish people. Evidently, therefore, the apostles were already so confident of the authority of Christianity, that they had the courage of God's own prophets, they were ready to risk everything in behalf of truth and virtue. Such a writing must have rested on the supernatural.

3. *The Epistles of John.* These are remarkable, not for their references to miracles, but for the assured tone of Christian authority in them. The Christian body had at length become homogeneous. The language of the apostle implies that there had been much of a disturbing nature, but it was rapidly working itself out. The same strength of conviction and moral intensity is found in John as in James, though they were very different men, and their Epistles are very different in form and in expression.

4. *The Epistles of Paul.* Fourteen Epistles are ascribed to Paul. Of these, only *five* allude to miracles. *Nine* make no special allusion to them. Of these *nine, four* are addressed to individuals who were the writer's intimate companions and colleagues; *five* are congregational addresses, sent to those four societies with the religious condition of which the writer was in the main well content. He needed no special argument to sustain his apostolic authority. The Pastoral Epistles,—1 and 2 Timothy, Titus,—like James and Jude, point to a state of the Christian Church which was full of spiritual difficulty and danger; and yet there is no wavering, no timidity, no calling in of miracles to overawe and silence the unruly elements in the Church, but just a calm reliance on the authority of the gospel and on the stability of the Christian edifice. The Christianity revealed in the Pastoral Epistles of Paul held its place in the world as an earnest, remonstrant force, opposed not merely to religious errors but to evasive pretexts, to illusions, to hypocrisies, and to immoralities, Jewish and Gentile, a protest against the unintelligible jargon, the interminable wranglings, the sophistry and impiety, which its own energy, simplicity, and grandeur had woke up on every side of it, as its assailants.

In the midst of earnest remonstrances, some of the sublimest passages of the apostolic writings are introduced. In the Pastoral Epistles no less than fourteen of these magnificent parentheses occur. "It is the characteristic of minds habitually tranquil, conversant with what is great and pure, when summoned by a sense of duty to join issue, hand to hand, with the lawless and disorderly of this world, to revert, as if with a rebound of soul, to the loftiest themes, as if desiring to escape from the scene of confusion to the serenity of its happy and wonted meditation." The existence of such passages in the apostolic writings is a clear evidence of the habitual tone of the apostle's faith, which is one that rests on the supernatural, but not like the faith of a fanatic, but as one who could not doubt the facts, because they were so abundantly attested.

The Epistle to Philemon does not touch the supernatural. It shows the mellowed gentleness of a spirit which, at the end of years of labour and suffering, has survived all its vehemence but none of its sensibility. It is of avail in the argument as proving, beyond all doubt, that the writer was not one who fanatically boasted of the supernatural. The historical and the supernatural are so closely connected that we cannot separate them without violence.

The two Epistles to the Thessalonians are generally without reference to miracles, historically regarded; but in the first chapter of the first Epistle the word δύναμις occurs, evidently employed in a technical and conventional sense which implies belief in the supernatural. The gospel came to the Thessalonians, the apostle says, not only in word but ἐν δυνάμει (1 Thess. i. 5). This cannot mean merely with spiritual power, because the words follow, καὶ ἐν Πνεύματι ἁγίῳ ("*and in the Holy Ghost*"). By the date of this Epistle the word δύναμις had acquired a meaning which probably carried an allusion to the miraculous attestation of the gospel. The most important element in the two Epistles to the Thessalonians is the prediction of the second advent of Christ. If, as it has been alleged, the apostle Paul was a believer in

the supernatural because he was a dreamer, an enthusiast, a visionary, how is it that when dealing with such a subject he is so calm and balanced? "A tone of calm affection and of a subdued feeling, the consequence of long continued suffering, pervades both Epistles, especially the first, which is distinguished also by the earnestness of its admonitions as to conduct and temper, in purity, rectitude, sobriety, gentleness, and avoidance of every guise and semblance of evil." If we try to get rid of the supernatural, we are compelled to regard the apostles as men who strangely mingled in their mental structure, imbecility, extravagance, and a blunted sense of the obligations of truth, with the highest qualities and noblest dispositions. Notwithstanding the evident perplexity of the Thessalonians because of their misapprehensions of the prediction of the second advent of the Lord, the second Epistle shows that the apostle did not share with them in their excited state of mind, but viewed the prediction calmly and soberly, showing that he was himself either supernaturally assisted to understand such a subject and view it aright, or that he was naturally of a very vigorous mind.

The Epistle to the Ephesians. In several places in this Epistle we might expect special reference to miracles; as when, in chapter iv. 11, 12, the Christian offices are enumerated, and vi. 10–17, where the armour of the Christian soldier is described. Yet there is no direct allusion to them. The writer dwells much upon the most elevated subjects, and seems in thought to be among "the principalities and powers," yet he never loses his balance. *Bright* meditations did not lead him towards the supernatural, because he was no *enthusiast; gloomy* meditations did not drive him in the same direction, because he was no *fanatic.* He kept close to the course of practical wisdom and virtue.

The Epistles to the Philippians and to the Colossians. The same calm strength is seen in these. A lofty theology, a bright immortality, a pure and a finished morality, a loving fervour, and a sharply-struck individuality are all to be found,

but *no allusion to miracles*, although there were seasons when the writer might have looked for them, as in the dangerous illness of Epaphroditus. A distinct protest is made to the Colossians against that spurious pietism, which so easily enslaves feeble minds by its abstracted mysticism and its ascetic practices and its superstitious observances; yet in no case are miracles appealed to, although the writer was fully acquainted with the Old Testament, and was Jewish in the general spirit of his education.

Thus, it is argued, the Christian writings, when they make no special allusion to miracles, manifestly rest on the supernatural. The faith which is expressed in them is a calm, sober, deep faith, which accords with the sincerity of the witnesses, and shows that they were neither deceived nor deceivers.

A similar argument, although perhaps not one of so much force, may be founded on the writings which do directly allude to miracles, by considering the tone and manner of the Christian writers when they speak of the supernatural. Is it that of men whom we can imagine either intentional deceivers, or deceived because of their weakness, enthusiasm, or superstition? There are seven apostolic Epistles which affirm the miraculous or allude to miracles. There are *five of Paul's*—Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Hebrews (assumed to be Paul's)—and 1 and 2 Peter. As to the genuineness of these writings, it is only 2 Peter which is really open to a divided verdict. As to the argument on miracles, it is of no consequence whatever to deny the authenticity of 2 Peter. If it is a forgery or attempted imitation, it is so successful that, notwithstanding many critical difficulties and the paucity or inconclusiveness of the external evidences, it did obtain currency at an early period, and at a later time made its way into the canon. If it be genuine, then its majestic simplicity and its fervour show what was the temper and feeling of "Simon Peter, the servant and apostle of Jesus Christ." Any way, it points to a state of mind and heart in the early Church quite inconsistent with the supposition of extravagance and super-

stition; for that Peter should make the statement which he does in respect to miracles, if there was not a general receptiveness for such a statement, would be to incur a great risk of rejection of his authority. The first Epistle of Peter is distinguished by the same characteristics. It is addressed to the "dispersed" sojourning in the provinces of Asia Minor, amongst whom the apostle Paul had laboured with mighty signs and wonders, and where Christianity had prevailed over heathenism. The resurrection of Christ is affirmed in varied phrases five times, and in a manner inseparable from the context. And in chapter iii. 22, we have a reference to the ascension. The main intention of the writer is ethical and spiritual, and he introduces the principal facts of Christianity only indirectly. But still he introduces them in a series, going on from the merely historic facts to those which are in the invisible and supernatural world.

The Epistle to the Hebrews. The argument in the case of this Epistle is still more striking and conclusive, whether it be held to be Paul's or not. Its antiquity is vouched for both by external evidence and by its allusions to the Jewish Temple, showing that it was published before the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70). The persons addressed were thoroughly conversant with Jewish institutions, and with those forms of speech which had their source in the Jewish Scriptures, forms which had long been familiar to the Jewish ear through the medium of the Greek version, the LXX. We find at the very beginning of the Epistle a distinct affirmation of the superhuman dignity of Christ; and the gospel is said to be witnessed to by God with signs and wonders, and divers powers and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to the Divine pleasure (*συνεπιμαρτυροῦντος τοῦ Θεοῦ σημείοις τε καὶ τέρασι, καὶ ποικίλαις δυνάμεσι, καὶ Πνεύματος ἁγίου μερισμοῖς, κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ θέλησιν*, ii. 4). "To Jewish ears these phrases carried a conventional meaning that stood clear of all ambiguity; it is an authentic formula of the Old Testament, bringing recollections with it that enshrined the staple of the national belief. Think

what we may of the articles of that belief, these phrases revealed to the mind of the Jew of the apostolic age, that long series of miracles which had placed the people in a position of the nearest relationship with God. The words and the combinations of them are identical throughout the Old Testament and the New: καὶ ἔδωκε Κύριος σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα μεγάλα—τὰ σημεῖα καὶ τὰ τέρατα τὰ μεγάλα ἐκεῖνα—they were frequently in the Pentateuch, in the Psalms and in the Prophets. They had come also into current use in the Christian community in connection with events admitted to be supernatural, as appears in the Acts of the Apostles throughout."

The Epistle to the Romans. This Epistle, like that to the Hebrews, is in great part a theological treatise, but it contains special references to miracles in relation to the apostolic labours of St. Paul. Many, he says, had been obedient to the faith in the countries between Jerusalem and Italy, and that, not by preaching alone, but "by mighty signs and wonders" which Christ had wrought by his hands. It must be remembered that both the Jews at Rome, and the Gentile converts, were well acquainted with the Old Testament history, accustomed to the recitation of the Psalms and Prophets. They would, therefore, quite well understand the language employed. Moreover, the extraordinary progress of the gospel at Rome is not to be explained if there were no miracles in attestation of Paul's mission. Tacitus says that there was "*multitudo ingens*" of Christians at Rome in the time of Nero; and whether we take it that there were few when Paul wrote his Epistle, or that multitudes were added afterwards, or that there was a multitude waiting to try his claims when he appeared, he could not have spoken of miracles so freely, unless his ministry had borne out such language.

Galatians and 1 *and* 2 *Corinthians.* There were many among those to whom these Epistles were sent who challenged the apostle's authority. How does he deal with such opponents in the case of his miraculous powers? He affirms them boldly in the face of such doubts. In Corinth, he declares that his

apostolic mission had been distinctly confirmed by miracles, using the same familiar form of words, ἐν σημείοις καὶ τέρασι καὶ δυνάμεσι, and he appeals to the existence and exercise of miraculous gifts among the Corinthians themselves. At the same time, there is a wonderful sobriety and wisdom in his language in dealing with the subject of miraculous manifestations. Whether such language be the result of inspiration or of natural character, the argument is the same; such a man could not have spoken of miracles as he did unless they were real.

We may conclude this argument, which is intended to show that the apostolic testimony for the miraculous cannot be reasonably rejected, with the remarks of Mr. Taylor on the attitude of witnesses of miracles: "There are three mental conditions, easily distinguishable from each other, in which I can imagine an indubitable miracle to be witnessed. The *first* is that of mediæval credulity, or an incurious, unreasoning, inconsequential, passiveness, to which all things, natural and supernatural, come alike, and pass away without leaving an impression. The *second* state is that of our modern, dry, cold, sophisticated, scientific temper, scientific more than philosophical. Witnessed in this mood, a miracle would astound us, it would just curdle the brain, and produce no effect whatever upon the moral nature. But I can form an idea of a mental condition as much unlike the first of these two states, as the second. I can imagine myself to have come into a discernment of these unchanging realities of the spiritual and moral system, which *indeed* affects my welfare, present and future, so that the witnessing of a miracle would produce a feeling entirely congruous with such perceptions, and would neither astound nor agitate the mind. I can imagine myself to have so profound a sense of primary moral truths as that miracles would be confluent with the deep movements of the soul, and would produce no surge. I can imagine myself to have such a prospect of the plains of immortality—a prospect *moral*, not fanciful, not sensuous—as that the spectacle of the raising of the dead should assort itself with my feelings. So to see

'Death swallowed up in victory,' would excite no amazement. I read this very greatness in the apostolic Epistles; and it sheds the steady brightness of the morning upon St. Paul's discourse concerning the resurrection. This great fact, concerning the destiny of man, which he there expounds, I also hold to be a truth undoubted. But, if beside thus believing it with my modern logical persuasion, if instead of this belief, I had St. Paul's sight and consciousness of it, then, like him, I could speak of miracle briefly, firmly, and without a note of wonder." [1]

Regarded, then, as an appeal to accept the testimony of the apostles, the argument for miracles rests upon the whole strength of Christianity as a practical doctrine. It helps the objector nothing to make a distinction between one miracle and another. We can easily believe that in the whole of the biblical records there should be some narratives found which will not bear as close a scrutiny as others, but if the structure of revelation is built up, as a complete structure, on a foundation in which the miraculous is essentially included, then the doubt as to particular instances becomes a question of criticism, rather than of general principle. It is beyond all dispute that the first Christians believed that miracles had been wrought, and that the resurrection was the corner-stone of their faith; thus, as their testimony was sincere, and as the record leaves us in no doubt that they actually witnessed what they believed to be miracles; and as what they witnessed was never proved not to have been miraculous, but on the other hand has been borne out by the subsequent history of Christianity, which can only be explained on the view that its origin was miraculous; we are shut up to this alternative: either miracles are so incredible that *nothing* can prove them, or the evidence of the Christian miracles is satisfactory. The abstract objection, *à priori*, to the possibility of miracles, we have seen to be untenable. The possibility being admitted, and the antecedent probability being, at least, considerable, the objection stands face to face with the whole force of Christianity and the character of the Christian witnesses, and falls to the ground.

[1] Pp. 224–5.

CHAPTER VI.

INSPIRATION.

ADMITTING that a revelation is possible and morally necessary, and that even though miracles be involved in it they are not incredible, the objector may shift his ground from the anti-supernatural, and taking the Scriptures, as the records of a Divine revelation, may set over against them the affirmations of science, in its different departments, historical, moral, physical. It has been alleged as a disparagement of the authority of Christianity, as a professedly Divine religion, that the Christian advocate has not been able to defend everything to be found on the pages of Scripture, against the attacks of historians, moralists, and the physicists of modern times. The authority of the Christian religion is supposed to be identified with a certain particular theory of the Divine authority of the sacred writings. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary that the defender of Christianity should be clear of any difficulties which may arise from this source. We must understand in what sense the Bible, as an inspired book, is the standard of reference, on whose authority the Christian undertakes to declare the revealed Truth of God.

We have already referred to the distinction which is sometimes drawn, between the word of God in the Bible, and the Bible as the word of God. It is plainly not correct to speak of the Bible as a revelation, unless it is to be regarded as in some sense a unity, and a revelation as being a unity. When we remember that the writings, collected together now in one volume, were given to the world at different times, and from different places, and in different languages, from the time of

Moses down to the time of the apostle John, and from the Sinaitic desert to the coast of Asia Minor, and the city of Rome; writings, some of which are so ancient that we may believe they are among the earliest documents of the human mind; on what ground is it that we separate them from other writings, and call them a revelation of God, unless it be that there is a *unity* in them, which is traceable in the form of a progressive course of connected truth? We cannot exercise an eclectic right in dealing with these books, choosing which we will regard as revelation, and what truths out of them we will take as Divine, unless we give up altogether the attempt to vindicate their claim to be received as an inspired whole; in which case they will be put on the same level with all other books, and simply judged by their internal evidence, a view which can scarcely be harmonized with any true theory of revelation. We must therefore clear this question of some, at least, of its difficulties.

The term "*Inspiration*" has itself, perhaps, led to some of the perplexity which attaches to the subject of the authority of Scripture. It has originated in the use of the Greek word θεόπνευστος by the apostle Paul, and similar words in other places in the New Testament, which have been supposed to convey the meaning, that the sacred writers were under a supernatural influence at the time when they wrote, and that the Spirit of God employed them as passive instruments. It is quite certain that among the Jews, and especially after the close of the Old Testament canon, when the worship of the letter of Scripture became a substitute for the more living intercourse with the Spirit of God, the conception of inspiration was that of a supernatural possession of the human faculties, for a time, and for the special purpose of writing the words of Scripture. This is illustrated by the story of the miraculous origin of the Septuagint version. To give authority to the Greek translation, it was supposed necessary to show that the Spirit of God had miraculously dictated the Greek rendering, that its accuracy might not be doubted. The seventy translators were

shut up in separate cells, and excluded from mutual conference and consultation; their renderings were found to be identical. Josephus accepted substantially this mythical account, which was first given in a more reasonable form by Aristæus. The early Christian Fathers, such as Irenæus, Justin Martyr, and even Augustine himself, seem to have accepted the supernatural original of the translation. When critical study began to develop the facts, and the history of the version was looked at in a clearer light, as it was by Jerome, it was given up as untenable. That there should be a superstitious reverence for the letter of the sacred writings, was the natural consequence of decay in the spiritual life of the people. But while the Divine authority was attached to the words of the Old Testament, there was no theory of the mode of inspiration which could be said to be the current theory, at the time of our Lord. The passages which are quoted from the New Testament cannot be made to support any particular view of the inspiration which they claim for the sacred writers. They are such as the following:—John v. 39—Ἐρευνᾶτε τὰς γραφὰς, ὅτι ὑμεῖς δοκεῖτε ἐν αὐταῖς ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἔχειν· καὶ ἐκεῖναί εἰσιν αἱ μαρτυροῦσαι περὶ ἐμοῦ ("Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me"); John x. 35—Οὐ δύναται λυθῆναι ἡ γραφή ("The scripture cannot be broken"); 2 Tim. iii. 16—Πᾶσα γραφὴ, θεόπνευστος, καὶ ὠφέλιμος πρὸς διδασκαλίαν, πρὸς ἔλεγχον, πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν, πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ. ("All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness"); and 2 Peter i. 21—Οὐ γὰρ θελήματι ἀνθρώπου ἠνέχθη ποτὲ προφητεία, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ Πνεύματος ἁγίου φερόμενοι ἐλάλησαν ἅγιοι Θεοῦ ἄνθρωποι ("For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"). From these passages we can infer that the Lord and His apostles regarded the Scriptures of the Old Testament as having Divine authority, as not having come simply by the will of man; and that they thought of the

sacred writers as at times under a prophetic impulse in which they were carried away beyond their ordinary consciousness (φερόμενοι), which might be compared to a Divine breath of wind, as at the day of Pentecost.

So far, the supernatural is undoubtedly recognised as connected with the writings; but beyond the recognition of a prophetic impulse, it seems impossible to attribute any theory of inspiration to the New Testament writers. But when we leave the New Testament, and begin to inquire what was the view of the early Christian Church, we find ourselves in face of a theory of mechanical dictation, which was certainly not justified by our Lord and His apostles, and which even among the rabbinical Jews was scarcely as formulated as it afterwards became. As to the supernatural origin of the Old Testament writings, there was no difference of opinion among the early Fathers. As to the extent of inspiration, there was some variety. See Justin Martyr: "Cohortatio ad Græcos," § 8 and § 10. The writers are compared to a lyre struck by "the Divine plectrum descending from heaven." Athenagoras, "Plea for the Christians," § vii., uses a similar illustration: "Moses, and Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and the other prophets were lifted in ecstasy above the natural operations of their minds by the impulses of the Divine Spirit, and uttered the things with which they were inspired, the Spirit making use of them as a flute-player breathes into a flute—ὥσεὶ καὶ αὐλητὴς αὐλὸν ἐμπνεῦσαι (§ ix.). Such a view, while it is expressed vaguely, doubtless implied a supernatural authority. Irenæus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Clement of Alexandria, all use language which implies that the written word was regarded as the voice of the Spirit. The books of the Bible are, as Cyprian expresses it, "divinæ plenitudinis fontes." It was among the later Fathers, the schoolmen and the post-Reformation theologians, that the idea of Divine authority was connected with a theory of verbal inspiration. The designation of the Scriptures as "Divine writings," "the Lord's writings," "inspired writings," "heavenly messages," and so forth, and the sentiment attached to such designations, which regarded

it as a sin to suppose that any kind of error, even a chronological, topographical, or scientific error, contradiction, or discrepancy could be found in them, gradually took the form of a direct assertion of literal infallibility. Augustine employed the term "pen of inspiration." But Augustine, with his remarkable insight, which he mingled with many crude and illogical views, admitted that natural faculty and opportunity were not overridden by supernatural impulse. (See his "De Consensu Evangelistarum," ii. 12.) His "Letter to Jerome" (82, iii. 24) distinguishes between the canonical Scriptures and others, as containing no mistake or statement intended to mislead. But in speaking of the authority of the Scriptures he distinctly founds it on the authority of the Church: "Ego vero evangelio non crederem nisi me catholicæ ecclesiæ commoveret auctoritas." (C. *Ep. Fundamenti*, 5.) Among the later Fathers, and during the middle ages, there were some who laboured to modify the extreme view of literal infallibility. Theodore of Mopsuestia, Chrysostom, Jerome, and Basil the Great, were compelled to admit that there might be the evidence of human infirmity in the writers, but they held that it was overruled by the Spirit of God.

It was by the growth of the doctrine of tradition, side by side with the authority of Scripture, that the minds of men were in some degree turned from the idea of an infallible book to that of an infallible Church. The rule of Vincentius Lerinensis, "Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus, creditum est," modified in some degree the doctrine of inspiration. The sphere of authority was extended. Others besides the canonical writings began to be regarded as inspired. During the middle ages, when Catholic authority was undisputed, the sacred writings, although still nominally the supreme source of truth, were held in less honour than the traditions and interpretations of patristical writers. In the ninth century, a discussion was held between Agobard, Archbishop of Lyons, and Fredegis, Abbot of Tours, on the question of biblical infallibility, in which the latter, as defender of the verbal theory, maintained

that the very words were formed miraculously in the lips of the writers: "sed etiam ipsa corporalia verba extrinsecus, in ora illorum ipse formaverit." But the reply of Agobard is worthy of notice: "Quanta absurditas sequetur, quis divinare poterit!" Abelard, too, with his free spirit, rebelled against the theory, and asserted the possibility of errors in the writings. The mystical writers who preceded, and in some measure prepared the way for, the great Reformation, taught a doctrine of individual illumination and private inspiration which led them to speak almost with disparagement of the Scriptures, as some of their successors do in the present day.

What was the view of the authority of Scripture which resulted from the growth of reverence for tradition and the claims of the visible Church, we may see in the decrees of the Council of Trent: "The synod, following the examples of the orthodox Fathers, receives and venerates with equal affection of piety and reverence all the books both of the Old and of the New Testaments, seeing that one God is the Author of both, as also of the said *traditions*, as well those appertaining to faith as to morals, as having been dictated either by Christ's own word of mouth, or by the Holy Ghost, and preserved by a continuous succession in the Catholic Church." But how this view of tradition worked we see in the case of the Jesuits, who, in order to magnify the authority of the Church, in their controversy with the Jansenists taught that it was not necessary to suppose the words of Scripture themselves to be inspired.

It was the main object of the Reformers to set the authority of the Scriptures above that of tradition. They saw that to reinstate the Bible, as the original and sole authority of truth, was absolutely necessary. We see more or less of that aim in all the early Reformers, the Waldenses, John Wickliff, Huss, Wessel, Wesel, Reuchlin, Erasmus; and it came out in all its force in Martin Luther, who smote the giant errors of the corrupt Church with the sword of the Spirit—the word of God. In the controversies which immediately followed the more practical work of the early Reformers, controversies which,

being doctrinal, turned often on the meaning of passages of Scripture, the theory of a literal, verbal inspiration and infallibility was fully developed and formally expressed—revelation and Scripture were identified. Such men as Hollazius, Grotius, Buxtorf, Quenstedt, and others, asserted the entire infallibility of every word in the sacred pages, and represented the writers as mere amanuenses of the Spirit. "Inspiration," said Baier of Halle (*obt.* 1695), "is an action of such a kind that God by it communicated supernaturally to the intellect of those who wrote, not only the ideas of all things which were to be written, corresponding to the objects, but also the words themselves, and all by which they should be expressed, and impelled their will to the act of writing." In this view most of the school, with slight differences, would acquiesce. (See the writings of Gerhardt, Hugo Grotius, Calixtus, Quenstedt, Quesnel, Calovius, from 1637 to 1686.) This view, which prevailed in the Lutheran Church, was formulated thus. The work of inspiration was divided into three parts :—

I. *The Divine impulse to write* (*mandatum externum et internus Spiritus Sancti impulsus*). See Exod. xvii. 14; Deut. xxxi. 19; Isa. viii. 1; Jer. xxxvi. 2; Hab. ii. 2; Rev. i. 11.

II. *The suggestion supernaturally of the matter* (*suggestio rerum*). All and each matter in Scripture, whether it could be known by natural faculties or not, was expressed by means of a Divine assistance and direction, which was infallible, by the direct suggestion, inspiration, and dictation, of the Holy Spirit, so that, as if to a pen, they were so committed that they could not be written otherwise; in other words, the writers were the passive instruments of the Holy Spirit, and the influence was not limited to the chief matters but belonged to the minutest things. A special and extraordinary influx of the Spirit, and illumination of the mind, and a peculiar afflatus and dictation were alleged. If the smallest verse of Scripture were admitted to be without this immediate influence of the Spirit, the whole book would lose its authority. Some, however, attempted to modify the theory so as to preserve the individual's

power of thought and will while he was supernaturally guided from error (as Quenstedt).

III. *Suggestion of the words* (*suggestio verborum*). The Holy Spirit supplied, inspired, dictated, all the words, though at the same time He permitted each writer to employ his own idioms and expressions according to his own judgment. In some cases the variety of style observed among the writers was ascribed entirely to the difference of the matter, there being no accommodation to human infirmity. And some went so far as to maintain that New Testament Greek was not really inferior to that of Demosthenes. There were no barbarisms or solecisms. And there is no least error either in matter or form. "All that is there is absolutely true, whether dogmatic, moral, historical, chronological, topographical, onomastical; there is no ignorance, no carelessness, no oversight, no slip of memory, even in the most unimportant external matters. If the least error be admitted, *perit fidei nostræ certitudo et infallibilitas*." "Plenary inspiration," says Hodge, "does not imply that the sacred writers were infallible, except for the special purposes for which they were employed. They were not imbued with plenary knowledge. As to all matters of science, philosophy, and history, they stood on the same level with their contemporaries. They were infallible only as teachers, and when acting as the spokesmen of God."[1]

Towards the end of the seventeenth century the theory began to receive some modification. The attempt of the *Syncretists*—as they were called, who, while rejecting the Roman Catholic view of tradition, would place beside the Protestant principle ("the Bible and the Bible alone") the consent of the first five centuries (*consensus quinquesecularis*)—led to a qualification of the verbal view. The Holy Spirit preserved from error in matters concerning salvation, but did not supernaturally exclude error in subsidiary and unimportant matters. Inspiration became thus "assistentia et directio Spiritus Sancti." The philosophy of

[1] See Dr. Hodge's "Systematic Theology," vol. i. 182–4, and chap. vi., "On the Protestant Rule of Faith."

Leibnitz, interpreted and applied by Wolff (1679–1754), introduced a new spirit into theology. The attempt to place theological dogma on a philosophical foundation, though it failed, set free the minds of men from mere rigid theory, and led to a new application of thought to such questions as that of inspiration. The eighteenth century was the period of critical and philosophical inquiry. The influence of the humanistic writers, Lessing and his successors, and of the philosophical speculators, Kant and his successors, was fatal to the verbal theory. Neither in Germany, nor in Great Britain, has it found any really formidable defenders during the last century, and it is now almost universally discarded as illogical, and contradicted by the facts of the case,—the transmission of the documents, their style, and their manifest differences in spiritual value. While there can be no doubt that the theory of verbal inspiration came from the Rabbinical school of the Jews, and was applied by them to the Old Testament, it is important to remember that among the Jews themselves there was a distinction made in the books of the Old Testament. The "*Law*" or "Pentateuch" was regarded as embodying a higher authority than the "*Prophets*," and the Prophets than the Hagiographa. Indeed, in the case of the last named collection of writings the authority was regarded as so much lower than that of the Law, that the books contained in it held much the same position among the Jews which the *Libri ecclesiastici* did in the early Church, books which were read with a reverential feeling attached to them, but which were not held to be of binding authority like the prescriptions of the Law. It has been well remarked by Mr. Row in his Bampton Lectures, p. 443, that "such a theory exposes us at every point to the attacks of unbelief, and constitutes one of the most dangerous weapons which it brings to bear on the popular mind."

It was the revived critical study of the Bible, and the discovery of difficulties and discrepancies in the sacred books, together with a renewed examination of their authenticity, which made it no longer possible to hold the position assumed

by the post-Reformation theologians. "For a time," says Hagenbach,[1] "commentators sought to remove all difficulties by the application of the principle of accommodation, or by an arbitrary exegesis; but at last the critics found themselves compelled by the rationalistic principle to maintain that Christ and His apostles could have erred, at least in such things as do not constitute the essential parts of religion. This was the case especially with the miracles and prophecies, to which the former apologists had appealed in support of their views. After they had in vain endeavoured to explain them away by artificial modes of interpretation, they ventured to assert that the sacred writers, in accordance with the peculiar circumstances of the times in which they lived, must write from a different point of view from that which modern theologians would take, thus renouncing the absolute authority of their compositions." Gradually, as the question of inspiration was more profoundly studied, it was admitted by the most philosophical theologians that the main point which has to be held fast is the living union of the Divine Spirit with the human spirit. It was the great Schleiermacher (professor of theology at Berlin from 1810, died 1834) who may be said to have first formulated another theory of inspiration in opposition to the verbal or mechanical view, which could be maintained no longer in the face of modern critical research. Schleiermacher was a Platonic idealist and mystic. Religion, with him, is the immediate consciousness of absolute dependence. Jesus Christ is the archetypal Humanity in whom the consciousness of God dwelt in perfection. He redeemed the world by liberating the God-consciousness of those who believed in Him from the burden and bondage of mere sense-consciousness. Schleiermacher regarded inspiration in connection with this redeeming work in the consciousness. The consciousness of the sacred writers was elevated spiritually, enabling them by a higher intuition to see the truth as others could not see it, and to expound it from a higher point of view. In our own country the exponent of

[1] "History of the Church," ii. 407.

this somewhat mystical view of inspiration was Dr. J. D. Morell, whose work on the subject excited at the time of its appearance considerable attention, although it was little more than an exposition of Schleiermacher's doctrine. The following passage sums up Dr. Morell's account of the theory : "The Divine authority of the New Testament in this view becomes a *living reality*. It contains the conceptions of men who lived and walked with Christ, who drank at the fountain-head of truth, whose religious consciousness was awakened and elevated by special and extraordinary agencies; who must be regarded, therefore, as coming nearer to the mind of Christ than any other men can do to the end of time. Hence their minds possessed a *canonical authority* for the succeeding Church ; they give us the first clear impressions from the Divine Antitype ; they appear all fresh from the heavenly world, and our highest wisdom as Christians is first to get our minds into the closest communion with them, as it regards the real elements of Divine truth, and then to develop those elements by all the light which succeeding ages will afford." This is called, frequently, the *Dynamical Theory*, in distinction from the verbal or mechanical theory. The central idea in it is the spiritual, dynamical force at work in the consciousness of the writers, the union of the Spirit of God with the spirit of man, impelling as a motive power, and preserving supernaturally from error, by the elevation of the human faculties. A very similar view has been put forth in our own country in the striking and eloquent work of Samuel Taylor Coleridge : "Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit." But Coleridge attempted to unite a mystical doctrine of individual inspiration with a dependence on the authority of the Church. "I comprise and conclude," he says,[1] "the sum of my convictions in this one sentence: Revealed religion (and I know of no religion not revealed) is in its highest contemplation the unity, that is, the identity or coinherence, of subjective and objective. It is in itself, and irrelatively, at once inward life and truth, and outward fact and luminary. But as all

[1] Letter vii. p. 114.

power manifests itself in the harmony of correspondent opposites, each supposing and supporting the other, so has religion its objective or historical and ecclesiastical pole, and its subjective or spiritual and individual pole. In the miracles and miraculous parts of religion, both in the first communication of Divine truths and in the promulgation of truths so communicated, we have the union of the two, that is, the subjective and supernatural displayed objectively, outwardly, and phenomenally, *as* subjective and supernatural." The Rev. F. D. Maurice has expounded the same principle in his essay on "Inspiration."[1] The great support of the authority of Scripture, according to this view, is the spirituality of the writers.

Another modification which was introduced into the doctrine of plenary inspiration was that which distinguished parts of Scripture on the ground of a lower and a higher inspiration, while regarding the whole as inspired in some degree and in some sense. The names of Lowth, Whitby, Doddridge, Dick, Hill, Henderson, Wilson, have been attached to this view, though it amounts to little more than a rejection of the verbal theory. On what principle are we to distinguish the books of Scripture? How can we test the inspiration of particular portions? It has been said that historical books do not bespeak as much inspiration as doctrinal, the Old Testament as the New, the doctrinal as the prophetic, the prophetic as the legislative. Evidently this is a view which is more dynamical than mechanical. But it plainly involves the difficulty that the reader of Scripture exercises a selective power, and that the revelation is a mixture of the more and less inspired, which demands another inspiration in the individual, or in the Church, for the practical result to be obtained—the communication of truth with Divine authority. Dr. Hodge[2] sums up the objections which may be brought against the dynamical view under four heads. I. That it ignores the distinction which the Bible makes between the sacred writers and other good men. II. That it is inconsistent

[1] "Theological Essays," viii.
[2] "Systematic Theology," vol i. p. 180.

with the special authority which they claimed and which Christ and His apostles claimed for them. III. That it is not to be reconciled with the whole nature of the Bible, which professes to be a revelation of truths not only undiscoverable by human reason, but which no amount of holiness could enable the mind of man to perceive. IV. That it is inconsistent with the faith of the Church universal. There is a truth in both the mechanical and dynamical theories which cannot be overlooked. On the one side, we must admit, with the verbal theory, that Divine communications have been made apart from the character of the instruments through whom they were made, as in the case of Balaam, and this is analogous with the Divine dealings elsewhere. The conscious co-operation of the instrument is not always necessary to the Divine action. But on the other hand, it must be admitted, with the dynamical theory, that the sacred writers were men of elevated consciousness, and that there is a true distinction in the spiritual value of the writings, which is due partly to the difference in the men who wrote them, and partly to the subject matter of their writings.

It may be here mentioned that the attempt to draw a distinction between plenary inspiration and verbal inspiration has failed. If the inspiration in question is the inspiration of the books, then the plenary inspiration of the books is the verbal inspiration ; but if the word plenary is applied not to the books but to the writers, then it is a form of the dynamical theory, and as such labours under the same disadvantage of vagueness. Dean Alford, in his Prolegomena to the Greek Testament, has made valuable remarks on the subject generally ; but while rejecting, which he does decidedly, the verbal theory, he attempts to retain the word *plenary*, to the sacrifice of perspicuity. "If I understand *plenary inspiration* rightly, I hold it to the utmost. The inspiration of the sacred writers I believe to have consisted in the fulness of the influence of the Holy Spirit, specially raising them to and enabling them for their work in a manner which distinguishes them from all others writers in the world, and their work from all other works. The men were

full of the Holy Ghost, the books are the outflowing of that fulness through the men,—the conservation of the treasure in earthen vessels. The treasure is ours in all its richness; but it is ours, as only it can be ours, in the imperfections of human speech, in the limitations of human thought; in the variety incident, first to individual character, and then to manifold transcription and the lapse of ages." In other words, Dr. Alford ascribes a plenary inspiration to the men but not to the writings as we have received them, to the matter but not to the form. This plainly says nothing, and is no theory of inspiration. It is the same with the attempt to seek a solution of the difficulties of the subject in the idea of a special Divine superintendence of the writers during the act of writing, and a special supernatural influence resting upon them when they wrote certain portions of their work. The belief is too vague to be satisfactory. It seems absolutely necessary to separate all theories of inspiration which attempt to explain the mode by which the Spirit of God acted on the minds of the men who wrote the Bible, or the degrees in which they were under His influence, from the much more practical subject of the authority of the sacred writings. It has been observed by Dr. Westcott in his very able little work, "The Bible and the Church" (preface, p. viii.), that "the Bible may be treated historically or theologically. Neither treatment is complete in itself, but the treatments are separable. The historical foundation rightly precedes and underlies the theological interpretation." "The formation of the collection of Holy Scriptures was, to use a term which ought never to be supposed even to veil the action of a present God, according to natural laws; slowly, and with an ever deepening conviction, the Church received, after trial, and in some cases after doubt and contradiction, the books which we now receive. The religious consciousness which was quickened by the words of the prophets and apostles in turn ratified their writings. The judgment which was in this manner the expression of the fulness of Christian life was not confined, in early times, by rigid or

uniform laws, but realized in ecclesiastical usage. The Bible was not something distinct from and independent of the Christian body, but the vital law of its action. The Church offered a living commentary on the Book, and the Book an unchanging test of the Church. The extreme limits of the collection were not marked out sharply, but rather the outline was at times dim and wavering, yet not so as to be incapable of satisfactory adjustment. A corrupted Bible is a sign of a corrupted Church; a Bible mutilated or imperfect, a sign of a Church not yet raised to the complete perception of truth. In the Church and in the Bible, God works through men. As we follow the progress of their formation, each step seems to be truly human; and when we contemplate the whole, we joyfully recognise that every part is also Divine."

The theories of inspiration which have been put forth are mere abstract, *à priori* guesses, as to the method of God in providing us with the Bible. The true principle of inquiry must be *inductive. What is the Bible as it comes to us? How has it come to us?* As a revelation of Divine truth, which we believe it to be, *what is the nature and ground of its authority?* The first and second of these questions we shall not attempt to answer fully in this place, as they are necessarily involved in the subject of the canonical authority of the Scriptures, which we shall consider in a subsequent chapter. The authority of the sacred writings is neither arbitrary nor merely adventitious, but rests on a twofold basis: that of *internal evidence*, the supernatural character of the contents; and that of *external testimony*, the character of the writings having been submitted to the approval of the whole body of believers from the beginning, and being guaranteed by the Spirit in the Church. The life of the believing community has, doubtless, itself, to a large extent, flowed from the Divine source in the Word. But the history of the Bible shows us that there was no mere formal submission of God's people to an external authority, but a free exercise of their enlightened and sanctified judgment, which itself was a work of the Spirit as real as that which inspired the prophets and apostles. But

it is important to ascertain, as far as possible, by what criterion the people of God were guided, on what principle they acted, in separating from all other books those to which they attached Divine authority. It is an indisputable fact that there were other books, besides those now embodied in the Bible, which were in circulation among God's people, both in the old and in the new dispensation; how were the sacred books segregated, and how were they endowed in the mind of the Church with Divine authority? Why were they all regarded as in some sense *inspired?* Gaussen and others who have advocated the verbal theory, have put into such a term as θεόπνευστος their own *à priori* interpretation to support their own view. But this is to deprive ourselves of the advantage of a simple induction of facts. Our method must be different. In the case of the Old Testament, so much obscurity hangs about the formation of the canon that it is difficult to describe the principle on which it was made. But in the time of the New Testament, there can scarcely be any doubt that the ruling idea in the minds of the early Christians was that of the supreme authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that as delegated to His apostles. The instances of the two Gospels which were compiled by other than apostolic hands seem to bear out this view, for it is certain that, by the early Christians, the second Gospel was regarded as having the authority of the apostle Peter, and the third, of the apostle Paul. The Acts of the Apostles would be written much under the supervision of St. Paul. The Epistle to the Hebrews was very early ascribed to St. Paul, and though its authorship may be doubtful, its final place in the canon is due to its being believed to be Pauline. Among the leading churches, such as those of Ephesus, Corinth, Rome, there would certainly be, very early, an apostolic tradition, which must become a criterion by which all supposed apostolic writings would be tried. The apostles certainly believed, and acted upon the belief, that they had a special Divine authority given them by Christ, by which they "gave commandment" and declared the gospel. They did not usurp that authority over the faith of

others, but they spoke and wrote in the name of Christ. It would seem, then, that the first question as to any writing was, not, *was it inspired?* for, to a certain extent, the writings of apostolical Fathers were the writings of men whose consciousness was elevated by the Spirit of God above that of their fellows, and they were read and revered in the churches; but, *was it apostolic?* did it come from one whose function it was to *make Scripture?* There were differences in the state of mind of the writers, but that did not alter the fact that they were organs of the Spirit, with the especial function to lay the foundation of the kingdom of God in word and doctrine. The apostle Paul, when he sat down to compose the Epistle to the Romans, was scarcely in the same ecstatic state as the apostle John in Patmos, beholding the visions of the Apocalypse. The evangelists, collecting together and compiling the evangelical narrative, were scarcely in the same state of mind as Peter or Paul inscribing special, positive directions, which were to bind the Church of Christ through all ages. And yet, with this diversity in the operation of the Spirit, there was the same sense of responsibility in the fulfilment of the function. When we ask why it was that the disputed books were kept out of the canon so long, and why at last they were admitted, we see the principle manifestly at work, the *decided reference to apostolic authority.*

Accepting, then, the books of the New Testament as through the apostles, divinely authorized, the next question which particularly concerns us is, What are the limits which are prescribed to this authority? Did the apostles, in communicating their writings to the Church, intend them to be regarded as supernaturally given, and as possessing an absolute authority which is diffused through all the words? This is a question which must be answered by an examination of the writings themselves. No such absolute infallibility is claimed by the writers. They do not write as mere mechanical amanuenses. They do not treat the churches to which they write as mere passive recipients of supernatural communica-

tions. The mere fact that they wrote argumentatively and hortatively, and in the form of pastoral addresses to fellow-Christians, is evidence, that while they could speak with authority as to the commandments of Christ, they yet appealed to enlightened, sanctified human reason. The supernatural is certainly kept in the background, except in such a case as the Apocalypse, where the revelation is by vision. So far as their form is concerned, the writings of the New Testament proceed from the *spiritual life* of the apostles, with a few exceptional passages, in which the positive commandment of the Lord is announced. No one would maintain that in the *preaching* of apostles, which was certainly as truly guarded from error as their writings, there would be any such supernatural manifestation as would overbear the intelligent faith of the hearers; the preachers opened the Scriptures and reasoned with their hearers out of them. Taking *inspiration*, then, to denote the general complex fact out of which the Scriptures have come, and putting aside all theories as to the *mode* of the Spirit's operation in the minds of inspired men, which must ever be a mystery insoluble to human reason, we may discover these constituents:—

I. *The conscious possession of a Divine commission* to guide the minds of others, by the narration of fact, the expression of spiritual truth, and the prescription of the laws of the Divine kingdom. This would apply to Moses and the Prophets; although, in the case of some of the Old Testament books, the difficulty of ascertaining their authorship must be admitted, but does not invalidate the general principle.

II. *A sustained purpose to write* at a particular time and for a particular purpose, but with a consciousness of the relation of the particular purpose to the general interests of the Divine kingdom. This would lead to prolonged effort, directed thought, investigation, preparation, collection of materials as in the case of evangelists, and the conviction of special Divine assistance, and therefore authority, in the fulfilment of the design. It is of little importance whether we regard such a purpose to write as the result of a spiritual impulse, or afflatus,

or ecstasy, or as arising out of the providential guidance of circumstances in the Church itself. God speaks to man in many ways, both by the secret moving of His Spirit in the heart, and by the intercourse of fellow-creatures.

III. In special cases there may have been *a supernatural impression on the mind*, a *vision*, a *voice*, a *revelation to the inner man* which cannot be described; sometimes, perhaps, a *suggestion of actual words* which were remembered and recorded; an inspiration within the inspiration, in which the inspired man was chiefly the passive recipient of a Divine communication. And even when the utterance was the natural outcome of the spiritual life, there may have been, as doubtless there were in the case of the psalmists, outbursts of elevated thought and feeling which carried the writer much further than he himself fully understood; just as the words of genius may be more to subsequent ages than they were to him who first uttered them.

IV. The vouchsafement thus bestowed on the individual man, in some cases through an elevation of the natural faculties, in other cases by a supernatural fact, of whatever kind, was communicated to the body of believers; first, to a small community; then, to a number of communities; was received by them as the message of the Divine Spirit in distinction from all other communications; and thus became doubly sealed an inspired writing, *first* as proceeding from an inspired man, and *next* as approved by the people of God. The function of the Church, in thus testifying to the inspiration of the Scripture, is one which must evidently have been limited to a very short period, and which was not difficult of fulfilment. We need not suppose more than a sincere and simple faith, the working of the spiritual life, corresponding with that spiritual life which expressed itself in the Scriptures. And as soon as the last apostle was gone, that is about the close of the first century, it would not be possible to apply the test of apostolicity to any new writings, they would be relegated at once to the class of "*libri ecclesiastici*" by the date of their com-

position. The feeling of reverence which would naturally be attached to any writing which proceeded from an apostle, or which an apostle employed as though it were his own (as we may suppose was the case with the Gospels and Acts), left very little room for the exercise of the critical faculty; nor can we believe that the Christians of the first century would be prepared to examine critically a writing which came to them as apostolic. But common sense would enable them to judge whether it really came from an apostle, and the internal evidence would leave them in no doubt. There are some of the New Testament books, as 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Revelation, etc., which were regarded as of doubtful authority for a considerable period, but it may be that that was partly owing to their being indited either to individuals or believers generally, or to their character, as in the case of the Apocalypse. Those epistles which were sent to particular churches, such as the Galatians, Corinthians, Romans, Philippians, Thessalonians, etc., would be at once sealed with the testimony of the Christians who were addressed in them, and thus would be circulated from church to church, with an external evidence attached to them as their credentials. That the apostles had Divine authority, is implied in their office. That the Church believed that they had, is manifest on the face of ecclesiastical history. There is no higher authority in the New Testament, and it was promised to His apostles by the Lord Himself that they should receive the Spirit of God in such a manner that they should be "guided into all truth," that they should "remember what He said unto them," and that they should "bear witness because they had been with Him from the beginning." On them He breathed the Holy Ghost, and to them as representatives of Christ "all power was given," that they might "*teach all nations*," Jesus Himself being "*with them*," and with those who built on the same foundation, "*to the end of the world.*"

It will only be necessary in applying this view of inspiration to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, to remember that

through the long course of ages, during which the books of the Old Testament were written, there was among the Jewish people a body of believers, to whom the Scriptures were sent as really as though they were epistles addressed to churches. If the canon of the Old Testament was formed by the great synagogue in the time of Ezra, which is generally believed, the principle on which that synagogue proceeded in the formation of the canon would undoubtedly be substantially the same as that which was the basis of the New Testament canon; viz., what books have received the approval of the people of God as having Divine authority? It is impossible for us, at this distance of time, and with so little historical evidence, to examine the matter further, as to the mode of procedure. But we have in the New Testament a witness for the Old. It is the clear and undisputed doctrine of the New Testament, that the light given to the people of God, under the new dispensation, is greater than that under the old. But it is well to remember that, while the Old Testament is continually cited in the New, still there is no statement in regard to the authority of particular books, nor are we told by what kind of inspiration the prophets spake. The authority of the prophetic writings, as a whole, may be inferred from the manner of reference to them. The Holy Ghost is said to have spoken by their mouth: "God spake at sundry times and in divers manners unto the fathers by the prophets" (Heb. i. 1). But it has been remarked by Mr. Row[1] that all such passages "leave us without any information on the point, how far the Divine influence conveyed illumination which was only collateral to and not of the essence of the prophetic utterance;" in other words, whether everything which we find on the pages of the Old Testament has equal Divine authority. "Whatever opinion we may form as to the extent of Divine illumination which such passages attribute to the prophets on particular occasions, it is evident that to infer from them that the same illumination presided over the composition of every part of

[1] Bampton Lectures, p. 453.

the Bible, including the whole of the historical books, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Canticles, is to erect a pyramid of theory on an apex of fact. But still further, the quotations made by the writers of the New Testament from the Old have a very important bearing on the entire subject. They afford the strongest proof that they only attributed the general sense, and not the words in which it is conveyed, to the influence of the Divine Spirit. This is proved by the great freedom of quotation which is used in such reference. The extent of this can only be fully estimated by an actual comparison of the cited passages with their originals in the Old Testament. If one thing connected with this subject is more certain than another, it is that the mode in which the Old Testament Scriptures are referred to and quoted in the New is fatal to all theories of mechanical or verbal inspiration. Various theories have been propounded for the purpose of evading this difficulty, but all are destitute alike of foundation and of proof." We are left, therefore, to substitute for the mere baseless theory of mechanical dictation, the general fact of spiritual authority, recognised and revered by the body of the faithful from one generation to another, and especially by Him who was the Guide of His people in all things, and whom we cannot suppose upholding with His supreme authority, as the Scriptures of God, writings which were not both given by the Spirit and received by the Church. The fact that while the Old Testament Scriptures were undoubtedly regarded by Christ and His apostles as the word of God, they yet gave no definition of inspiration or of Divine authority, should be sufficient to quell all desire to go beyond the one broad foundation on which we are invited to rest, the testimony of the people of God corresponding with and confirming the evidence of the books themselves. "The only question," says Butler,[1] "concerning the truth of Christianity is, whether it is a real revelation; not whether it is attended with every circumstance which we should look for: and concerning the authority of Scripture,

[1] "Anal.," Part II. chap. iii.

whether it is what it claims to be, not whether it be a book of such a sort and so promulgated, as weak men are apt to fancy a book containing a Divine revelation should. And therefore neither obscurity, nor seeming inaccuracy of style, nor various readings, nor early disputes about the authors of particular parts, nor any other things of the like kind, though they had been much more considerable in degree than they are, could overthrow the authority of Scripture, unless the prophets, apostles, or our Lord, had promised that the book containing the Divine revelation should be secure from these things."

CHAPTER VII.

PROPHECY.

AS a branch of the argument for the Divine authority of the Scriptures, the subject of prophecy requires a separate treatment, not only on account of its importance, but because it should be kept distinct from the questions of authenticity and genuineness which arise out of the critical examination of the sacred books as ancient documents. Nor indeed should the subject of inspiration, although it may be said to embrace that of prophecy, hide, by its larger view of a supernatural authority attached to all the Scriptures, the force of the argument for Christianity which lies in the correspondence between the words of prophecy and the historical facts with which they are seen to tally. To one who admits the truth of inspiration, who believes that individual human minds have been under the special influence of the Holy Spirit of God, so that their action has been, at least for the time, superhuman, it can be no difficulty to believe that, ages before certain events occurred, language was employed by inspired men, which reached its true significance and fulfilment in such facts of history. A true and intelligent doctrine of inspiration does not involve any theory as to the mode of the prophet's thought. We may believe that his language contained a meaning greater even than he himself understood, and that although conscious that he was the medium of a Divine communication to the Church and the world, he may yet have been incapable of supplying the key to the secrets of his own words. That the Spirit of God should be especially united with the spirit of individual men, implies the possibility of their predicting the

future. We cannot rationally limit the action of the Divine Spirit, if it be admitted to be an uplifting of human faculties and consciousness. We cannot *à priori* determine what shall be the exact method of Divine revelation, when the general fact is granted.

But apart from the facts of the case, the probability, the moral fitness, of prophecy, as the prediction of the future, must be admitted to be considerable. For, *in the first place*, as *an appeal to faith*, a very direct appeal from Him who alone can supply, out of His omniscience, the prophetic word which we are invited to rest upon, it seems in harmony with all the other modes of the Divine communication that God should to some extent foretell the future. We cannot conceive a more real trial of the relation between two living intelligences than that which is involved in the making and holding of a promise. That man should remember God as the Author of the past, that he should fear God and obey His commandments as the living, present Ruler before whom he is working out his daily life, are demands made upon his faith. But a still greater demand is that which casts the *future* on the pledged word of One who declares what shall be before it comes to pass. A child at school is under discipline, and finding itself in the strong grasp of fact and law, its life easily shapes itself into order and goodness. But when the *Father's word* is listened to, as the word of love, which promises and holds out the attraction of hope to the eager mind and the swelling heart, then the *personal* relation is tested, and either strengthened or weakened by the test. The prophecies of Scripture, although not always expressed in the form of direct promises, were still intimately connected with a covenant of Divine redemption. They were blossoms on the Tree of Life which were afterwards to become fruit. As the people of God believed in the vitality of the tree, so did they cherish the words which foretold the future. All through the history of the Church, the prophecies are seen to have fulfilled, as prophecies, a great moral purpose, in the training and develop-

ment of human character. This alone would be a sufficient *à priori* vindication of their fitness as facts of revelation. *In the second place*, the volume of revelation being made up of instalments which follow one another, at the interval of many generations, sometimes even of ages, of centuries, and the whole extending over a period of some thousands of years, it seems antecedently probable that prophecy should be included in the revelation, for thus each portion of the Scripture may be built in to a solid structure, the prophecies which preceded having been already in some degree fulfilled before the last portion of Scripture is added. Thus the faith of those to whom the Scriptures have been sent is nourished by that which is already in possession. The enlargement of scope and significance is, therefore, a natural outcome of the prophetic method. Had there been no more than a general communication of moral truth, it is difficult to see how, as the world went on, seeing that the first truths of morality are easily seized, and require no long process of time to make them known, there would be any progressive preparation of the minds of men for a reception of the highest spiritual revelations of the Divine mind. But prophecy, as it was fulfilled, brought a larger and larger number of the human race into the position of believing expectation of Divine communications, and thus those communications could be made in larger and larger measure and fuller detail. This seems to be a method of Divine procedure in analogy with that which is seen elsewhere. Why have the secrets of Nature been reserved, kept back from the prying curiosity of the human intellect, until so late in the history of the world? Surely, because the race itself needed to advance to such a point of general culture, and developed capacity, as to be able to make practical use of its discoveries, otherwise such discoveries would not be of real service. Prophecy not only widens its stream with the course of time, but deepens its channel. It not only embraces a larger number of objects, but it surrounds them with a fuller measure of revelation, because they are brought into the current of the prophetic

word as a whole, the word that has been flowing down from the earliest ages. This remark will be further illustrated in the sequel. We refer to this progressive nature of prophecy here, only for the purpose of showing that, if revelation be admitted, it is *à priori* probable that prophecy, with its seals of fulfilment growing larger every age, will form an important part of it. *In the third place*, looking at the great facts of redemption, the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, the establishment and ultimate triumph of a spiritual religion in the world, it seems in the utmost degree reasonable that such facts should be foretold before they come into the sphere of history, that they should bless the world before they were actually part of its visible existence, like the twilight of dawn before the risen sun, and that they should, as fulfilments of prophecy, meet a faith in the hearts of men, prepared already to receive them, rather than take the world by surprise. Thus their demand as supernatural events is not overwhelming. They do not oppress the reason, but appear in a world which is already waiting for them, and by its acclaim of moral and historical response and acknowledgment, vindicates their fitness and supports their Divine authority. It was this argument which the Lord Jesus Christ employed, with irresistible force, in His appeals to His contemporaries. Had they believed Moses and the prophets, they would not have rejected Him. The testimony of the Scriptures was the preparation of those who received it for the Day of the Lord. Those who *saw* what was already to be seen, were open-eyed to see greater things; those who *saw not* what they saw, were blind even when the very Sun of Truth arose in the heavens. We can, surely, scarcely conceive that such events as those of the gospel history would have been permitted to transpire without having been foretold. We can scarcely reconcile such an absence of preparation for great change with the righteousness and benevolence of God. The greater the responsibility involved in the rejection of Christianity, the more antecedently probable is the gracious vouchsafement of a prophetic dispensation, which should lead

up the world to that climax of revelation, and to that climax of accountability. Thus, apart altogether from the consideration of prophecy, as we find it in the sacred volume, we may fairly regard it as a part of revelation which justifies its existence by its moral worth and fitness.

We now pass on to another preliminary topic which it will be well to remove from the threshold of the subject of prophecy, as irrelevant to the Christian argument. There is a metaphysical difficulty involved in the fact of *prediction.* How can the future be foreseen unless it is necessitated? If it be necessitated, how can the moral nature of man be maintained? The prediction of that which cannot be foreseen by any amount of human wisdom or calculation, is a miracle, or supernatural exercise of the power of the mind, which is not to be explained by any known laws of mental action. *Insight* is sometimes *foresight,* in a general sense. The mind may lay hold of a great principle, and foresee its universality and exemplification in the future. But the prophecies of Scripture were given through men who displayed no very remarkable powers of generalisation, no unusual philosophical insight, nor were they raised to such positions among their fellow-men that they should be capable, of their own knowledge and experience, to make forecasts of coming events; and the character of the prophecies themselves is such as forbids the supposition that they were due to the mere normal exercise of human faculty. They deal with topics too sublime, and they are connected together in a chain of marvellous continuity. The truth of prophecy implies the mystery of the miraculous. It rests, like all other facts of revelation, on a fathomless depth of unsearchable reality, the primitive reality of the universe, of which no human mind can give a rational account. The metaphysical difficulty must not be allowed to stand in the way of an *à posteriori* examination of the facts of prophetic foresight. If, as Butler has remarked, the course of the world harmonizes with the hypothesis of human freedom, it is of no importance, practically, whether that hypothesis be proved or not. If the fact of

prophecy be substantiated, then, however great the mystery involved, it must be accepted. In some way, unknown to us, the Divine Will is supreme, and the human will remains so far unfettered in its operation, that it leaves untouched the consciousness of free agency. How the infinite Mind foresees what it predicts, and how that which is foreseen is the outcome of freedom in the agents, it is no task of the student of prophecy to explain. Any theory on the subject must be of a metaphysical nature, and is therefore irrelevant to the present argument. It would be an altogether unscientific and irrational procedure to deny the possibility of prediction on grounds which would equally exclude the possibility of human responsibility, and all moral government. But it may be objected that many of the supposed fulfilments of prophecy are invalidated by the critical examination of the sacred books, which relegates to a period subsequent to the events the words of prediction, now placed in the sacred volume, where they are taken to be of a much earlier date. This objection would certainly have considerable force if entirely substantiated, and must be admitted to require careful attention in those cases to which it applies. But it will be found to cover only a very small proportion of the instances of prediction. It may be safely neglected in a general argument such as that now presented. We shall see that it is reduced to dimensions so small, in proportion to the whole course of prophecy, that it weighs only infinitesimally. The larger scope of prophecy is untouched by it. The more conspicuous predictions, such as that in the Old Testament of the judgments of Jehovah on the Jewish people, and that in the New Testament of the destruction of Jerusalem and the supersession of the Jewish economy by the Christian Church, cannot be affected by the difficulty. Difference of opinion as to the date of the Pentateuch, of the book of Daniel, of the latter portions of Isaiah and Zechariah, leaves untouched the fact that, centuries before Christ, His appearance and Messiahship were predicted. Critical theories as to the genuineness of the Gospels and the authority of the Apocalypse, do not alter the

main argument, that the Lord foresaw the coming judgment on His nation, that He proclaimed the triumph of His doctrine, and that at the first it was declared, by the Spirit of God, that there should be a great apostacy from Christianity, which should be the cause of a prolonged conflict in the history of Christendom. It must be admitted, at the same time, that the overstrained literalism of some interpreters of prophecy, and the fanciful spiritualism of others, have retarded the progress of a healthy biblical science, and lessened the value, in some instances, of the apologetic treatment of the prophetic writings. A wiser and larger principle should be adopted than that which lays the chief stress on the minute accordance of the prophetic language with the external facts of history. We must be content, at times, to follow the great trunk line of revelation, without tracing out every branch that seems to proceed from it. If, occasionally, we are baffled in the more detailed adjustment of words and facts, we must fall back upon that *spirit of prophecy*, which certainly can be seen bearing witness to itself age after age; and the evidential value of particular portions of the record will be best appreciated as it is studied in the light of the revelation, regarded as a whole. We must leave the truth of this principle to be vindicated by the course of the argument.

Before adducing the prophecies, whose fulfilment may be regarded as evidence of the truth of Scripture, the nature of the argument from prophecy must be clearly understood. A glance over the sacred books will be sufficient to discover distinctions in the prophecies which should be remembered. There is *a main theme*, the gracious redemption of man, which runs along the whole line of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. But there are *subordinate matters of prophecy*, which have more or less relation to the main subject, and which are introduced in a manner corresponding with that relation. The destiny of heathen nations, for example, is not a direct subject of prophecy, but it is referred to, in connection with the purposes of God in the history of His people and covenant. Again, the

evidence of prophecy differs according as it is direct or indirect. There are *unwritten prophecies*, *analogical correspondences* between the facts of the earlier and those of the later dispensations, which must deeply impress the mind which is prepared to appreciate such correspondences, although they may not be patent to the unbeliever; *typological anticipations*, which indicate the presence and agency of One Spirit in all ages, which to the believer are confirmations of the Divine appointments, and evidence that the facts of Christianity have their places in a Divine order which has been unfolding itself steadfastly from the beginning. And the *written prophecies* may again be distinguished into such as were *traditional*, being handed on from age to age, although not connected with any name of a prophet through whom they were communicated, and *oracular*, as being the oracles delivered directly by prophets commissioned of God, either by a special and particular gift of utterance bestowed for the purpose, or as part of the prophetic function fulfilled in the prophetic *order*. Now it is important to bear in mind that the evidential value of these different kinds of prophecy is not to be regarded as in all cases one and the same. Although they are combined together in one sacred volume, which gathers into itself the force of the whole body of revelation with all its various members, still it is not to be expected that they will work upon the unbelieving with the same logical conviction. Some will be capable of being urged as direct evidence of Divine prescience; others will be of little force except as they are viewed in their exact position in the order of revelation, and should not therefore be pressed as of special evidential value.

In dealing with the fulfilment of prophecy we must lay down the following conditions, which have been generally acknowledged as binding upon the Christian apologist in arguing from verbal prophecies to their supposed counterparts in events :— 1. The possibility of the prophecy being the result of human sagacity and foresight must be excluded. 2. The fulfilment must be sufficiently clear and distinct to be referred to the

prophecy. 3. The prophecy must be so separate from the event that it cannot be considered as in any proper sense the natural explanation of it. 4. The proportion of the correspondence must be such as to exclude the idea of mere coincidence, and to certify intention and purpose.

It has been sometimes alleged against the argument from prophecy that it rests upon instances which are vague and uncertain. Von Ammon, in his "Christology," urges this objection. He thinks the poetical and mystical language of the prophets renders the argument from its fulfilment weak. A few sentences, anticipating clearly the events of history, would be true predictions, and would be worth all the oracles of the Old Testament taken together. And such writers as Davidson, Eichhorn, and the rationalistic school of Germany generally, maintain that the prophets' delineations of the future are "in essence nothing but forebodings,—efforts of the spiritual eye to bring up before itself the distinct form of the future. The prevision of the prophet is intensified presentiment."

The following remarks, however, taken substantially from Hengstenberg, and quoted in the valuable article "Prophet," in Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible,"[1] will suffice to meet such objections :—1. God never forces men to believe. There is such a union of definiteness and vagueness in the prophecies as to enable those who are willing, to discover the truth, while the wilfully blind are not forcibly constrained to see it. 2. Had the prophecies been couched in the form of direct declarations, their fulfilment would have thereby been rendered impossible, or, at least, capable of frustration. 3. The effect of prophecy (*e.g.*, with reference to the time of the Messiah's coming) would have been far less beneficial to believers, as being less adapted to keep them in a state of constant expectation. 4. The Messiah of revelation could not be so clearly portrayed in His varied character, as God and Man, as Prophet, Priest, and King, if He had been the mere Teacher, which is all that such objectors acknowledge Him to be. 5. The state of the

[1] Vol. ii. p. 933.

prophets, at the time of receiving the Divine revelation, was such as necessarily to make their predictions fragmentary, figurative, and abstracted from the relations of time. 6. Some portions of the prophecies were intended to be of double application, and some portions to be understood only on their fulfilment.[1] The vagueness or obscurity of parts of a prophecy does not invalidate the argument from the fulfilment, if the fulfilment is clear so far as it is recognised. And in estimating the fulfilment, account has to be taken of the nature of the prophecy, which in some cases could not be otherwise than vague. Davison, in his very able "Discourses on Prophecy," has pointed out the existence, in "some of the more distinguished monuments of prophecy," of a double reference, a nearer fulfilment and a more remote, so that what has been alleged by some as an objection to the interpretation of prophecies of the Messiah, is obviated by the references of such instances to something like a general law of the Divine method. This double sense of prophecy "is not the convenient latitude of two unconnected senses, wide of each other, and giving room to a fallacious ambiguity; but the combination of two related, analogous and harmonizing, though disparate, subjects, each clear and definite in itself; implying a twofold truth in the prescience, and creating an aggravated *difficulty*, and thereby an accumulated proof, in the completion." "If the prediction distribute its sense into two remote branches or systems of the Divine economy; if it show, not only what is to take place in distant times, but describe also different modes of God's appointment, though holding a certain and intelligible resemblance to each other; such prediction becomes not only more convincing in the argument, but more instructive in the doctrine, because it expresses the correspondence of God's dispensations in their points of agreement, as well as His foreknowledge."[2]

"It is manifest," says Mr. Meyrick, in Smith's Dictionary,

[1] *Cf.* John xiv. 29, Ezek. xxxvi. 33.
[2] Davison, pp. 211–12. Second Edition.

"that the existence of a primary sense cannot exclude the possibility of a secondary sense. The question, therefore, really is, whether the prophecies are applicable to Christ. If they are so applicable, the previous application of such of them to some historical event would not invalidate the proof that they were designed as a whole to find their full completion in Him. Nay, even if it could be shown that the prophets had in their thoughts nothing beyond the primary completion of their words, no inference could thence be drawn against the secondary application; for such an inference would assume, what no believer in inspiration will grant, viz., that the prophets are the sole authors of their prophecies. The rule, *Nihil in scripto quod non prius in scriptore*, is sound; but, the question is, who is to be regarded as the true author of the prophecies, —the human instrument, or the Divine Author?"

Our argument, then, briefly summarized, is this,—that in prophecy we have a *foreshadowing*, more or less direct and distinct, of the course of Divine providence and human history, especially of the history of human redemption, which can be ascribed to no mere human source, and therefore is an evidence of the supernatural action of the Divine Spirit on the mind of man; in other words, of inspiration, that is, of the Divine authority of the Scriptures. We proceed to enumerate the most striking instances in which this prophetic foreshadowing of the future is exemplified, premising that all critical questions must be here put aside as not relevant to the argument as a whole, and confining our attention to the *direct*, *written* predictions, as affording the most palpable evidence of prescience, such as can be appreciated by every reader.

The Scriptures contain the record of a progressive series of revelations, which we are able thus to contemplate both in their unfolding order and in their organic unity. "When several successive revelations," says Bishop Warburton, in his "Divine Legation of Moses," "are given by God, some less, some more extensive, we must conclude them to be parts of one entire dispensation, which, for reasons best known to Divine wisdom,

are gradually enlarged and opened; consequently, every later must not only suppose the truth of every preceding revelation, but likewise their mutual relationship and dependency. Hence there may have been weighty reasons why God from the beginning should have been constantly giving a succession of dispensations and revelations." We may therefore divide the whole extent of revelation into nine periods. I. From the Creation to the Fall. II. From the Fall to the call of Abraham. III. From the call of Abraham to the bondage in Egypt. IV. From the bondage in Egypt to the settlement in Canaan. V. From the settlement in Canaan to the establishment of the monarchy. VI. From the commencement of the monarchy to the revolt of the Ten Tribes. VII. From the revolt of the Ten Tribes to the Captivity. VIII. The period of the Captivity and restoration of Judah, to the birth of Jesus Christ. IX. The period of the New Testament revelation, from the birth of Jesus Christ to the death of the apostle John. We will indicate, in a concise and summary manner, the progressive course of prophetic revelation through this succession of periods, showing how each stage of fulfilment became the starting-place for a new revelation.

I. Period: from the Creation to the Fall. (Gen. i. ii.)

The necessity of redemption was a hidden necessity until the appearance of sin. We cannot expect to find any distinct prophecy of redemption while the state of innocence is maintained, but we do find the relation of man to God clearly represented as one of dependence, intelligent obedience, confidence in Divine goodness, observance of Divine institutions, such as the Sabbath and matrimony. The garden planted by the Lord God, containing in it the two trees, "*the tree of life in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil,*" certainly taught to man that there was a possibility of fall, and a possibility of restoration,—for the Divine declaration was distinct: "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou

eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. ii. 16, 17). The *Tree of life* in ii. 9, is distinguished from the trees of the garden which were "*pleasant to the sight, and good for food.*" We may therefore suppose that it indicated in some way a provision of life, over against the possibility of death. This was a dim foreshadowing of redemption, which, although it could not be understood until the fall had made redemption a revealed necessity for man, must still have laid up in his mind the truth that God is the only Author and Giver of life, that He must be the Saviour from death, when death is denounced. This was afterwards more fully revealed, when the way of the *Tree of life* was cut off and guarded by the flaming sword; thus clearly pointing the dying creature to the will of God as the only source of salvation. Moreover, it is important to notice that in the primitive state of man, law and its sanctions are not the first revelation but the second; the first is *Love*, for man is placed in the garden of pleasantness to dress it and to keep it; he is made in the image of God, and provided with all that was needful for his life and happiness. Then, upon that foundation of the Divine Fatherhood, is based the revelation of human responsibility,—the law and its demands, its prohibitions and its threatenings. Thus, at the very outset of revelation, we have the broad *basis of redemption* laid down: "God so loved the world." He that becometh Judge, and the executor of the law, was first the Father, in whose creative all-sufficiency and infinite loving-kindness man would find the redemption which so soon was made necessary. It was the sin, working in the fallen creature, which turned him away, under a sense of guilt, from the *Love*, which, as it first brought man into being, could not forsake him even when the sentence was waiting for execution.

II. Period: from the Fall to the call of Abraham. (Gen. vi. to xii.)

1. *The Protevangel.* (Gen. iii. 15.) Putting aside the question as to the source whence were derived the words of the Divine announcement made immediately upon the Fall, whether

they were preserved by tradition during the patriarchal period, and handed on to Moses that they might be embodied in the Pentateuch, or whether they were communicated directly to him by special revelation, it is beyond dispute that they were regarded as containing a covenant of mercy. The curse, which was at the same time pronounced, and which corresponded with the facts of man's condition, was to be ultimately removed. Redemption was, in the germ, placed before man as a key to the purposes of God in the future. Only a very extreme criticism will deny that there is the prediction in such words of a coming personal Redeemer. It is unnecessary to attempt to define what were the primitive expectations raised by such a promise. It is sufficient that its place at the very commencement of the sacred volume illustrates the principle of revelation, which is seen exhibited in the whole course of the sacred writings, an ever-widening stream of prophecy, accompanied by and flowing along an ever-widening channel of sacred history, confirming and fulfilling the Divine word.

2. *The institution of sacrifice together with the history of Cain and Abel.* (Gen. iv. 3–16; *cf.* Heb. xi. 4.) We cannot determine the exact origin of sacrifice. It may have originated in a direct commandment, or by an adoption, under Divine guidance, of a custom springing from the human consciousness by a natural process. But the very early introduction of the record of sacrifice, in connection with messages and communications from God, however generally regarded, points to the future sacrificial system, harmonizes with the whole of revelation, could scarcely therefore be a mere casual notice, due to a human origin only.

3. *The ministry of Enoch.* (Gen. v. 21–24; *cf.* Jude 14, 15; Heb. xi. 5, 6.) Although the notices of Enoch are few and slight, and in some degree traditionary, still it may be maintained that he fulfilled a ministry in which prophecy was included, and testified on behalf of Divine righteousness in the midst of growing corruption. If he predicted judgment, which seems the natural conclusion from the words of Jude,

and was the tradition of the Jewish nation for centuries, as we see in the apocryphal Book of Enoch, then we may fairly place beside the fact of his ministry, nearly a thousand years before the flood, the fulfilment of his apocalyptic warnings in the time of the deluge.

4. *The ministry of Noah.* (Gen. v. 28 to ix. 29; *cf.* Heb. xi. 7.) Noah was a preacher of righteousness, and his name implies that he was also a preacher of *comfort* (*Noah*, *rest* or *comfort*. "*The same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed*"). We cannot doubt, as we are told in the Epistle to the Hebrews (xi. 7), that Noah spoke to his generation under the influence of inspiration, "*being warned of God of things not seen as yet;*" that he predicted the flood, certainly while the ark was preparing, and that he preached righteousness in view of the coming judgment. The ark itself was a visible embodiment of the prophecy. "In this instance," as Davison says, "prophecy served to exercise and sustain the faith of the righteous elect family. It spoke the long-suffering of God, in the intermediate opportunity of repentance to others (*cf.* 1 Pet. iii. 20), both of them purposes of religion, expressive of the righteous and gracious government of God."

The following excellent remarks of the same writer on the Noachic covenant will call attention to the main features of prophecy at that period. "The renovation of the world had also its auspices of prophecy. God set His bow in the cloud, and prophecy reflected her beams of light from the retiring waters. The predictions which follow the flood are simple and explicit, and they contain a covenant of mercy conveyed to the second progenitor of our race. But what is the nature of this covenant? The memorable character of it is this, that it is framed in a complete relation to the recent overthrow of the deluge. It is a charter of natural mercies and blessings, comprehending a second grant to man of dominion over the creatures, and over the earth; the promised multiplication of his species; and the pledge of an orderly

succession and return of the seasons: 'while the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease;' with one specific stipulation added, of God's mercy, that He would visit the earth with a deluge no more: 'And I will establish My covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there be any more a flood to destroy the earth' (Gen. ix. 11). Here prophecy, as we see, re-established the power and order of physical Nature, which had undergone so great a convulsion. Its promises were adapted, and with a special fitness, to the occasion; for to the relics of the human race, newly escaped from the terrors of the great deeps, the wreck of the world, and the general extirpation of their kind, what other engagements of the Divine favour could there have been more seasonable, or more instructive at this time, than that God had recalled His wrath with the flood, and restored the earth to them again, secured to their peaceful use and dominion. The distinctive and most opportune promise that this ruin of waters should be the last, is itself a signal monument of prediction. For who will say that a recurrence of the like catastrophe of destruction, a second deluge, was not then to man his most natural fear, or even his most reasonable calculation? But that word of promise took him out of his own fears and notions; and hitherto four thousand years have confirmed its truth. At this day we live under this covenant, coeval with the renewal of the world, and appointed, for so it is expressed, to be commensurate with its duration. This covenant, though not always so thought of, is our tenure; it gives the law to the elements and the seasons, till the second change shall come, ordained to be, not by the waters of a deluge, but by the instrumentality of another element, which in its turn will be the minister of God's purpose (2 Pet. iii. 7)."[1] The predictions which are contained in the words of Noah, cursing and blessing his sons, have been matter of much controversy. (Gen. ix. 25–27). Certainly, however opinions may differ

[1] "Discourses on Prophecy," pp. 83–5. Second Edition.

as to the application of the patriarch's language to the descendants of Ham and Japheth; it can scarcely be denied that his words to Shem have received a wonderful fulfilment. It is in the Shemite branch of the human family that the religious history of the world finds its greatest names and most valuable documents. The especial form of the blessing, "*Blessed be the Lord God of Shem*," certainly distinguishes the Shemite religion; and the promise that Japheth shall dwell in the tents of Shem, may be connected with that religious superiority which was accompanied with an ultimate civil inferiority; the descendants of Japheth should be possessors of larger territory, but admitted to the covenant blessing in a position of subordination.[1] This is the view of the passage supported by the Targum Jonathan, Jerome, Calvin, and others. The meaning seems to be that Japheth shall bring into the tents of Shem his wealth and renown, and receive there in return the blessings of religion, the "*name*" of Jehovah, the Lord God of Shem.[2] Without laying any great stress on doubtful exegesis, it may fairly be asked if this ancient division of the human family into three branches is not substantially confirmed, in the history of the world, and the separate characteristics of the Eastern, Northern, and Southern races.

5. *The confusion of tongues.* (Gen. xi. 1–9.) Although not in the form of direct prophecy, still the distribution of nations over the earth, and their separation from one another, with international jealousies and conflicts, is represented as ultimately connected with the working out of the Divine dispensations, and the revelation of both the severity and goodness of God. The presumptuous designs of ungodly men are overruled to promote the fulfilment of God's purposes. The main point, however, is this: that here at the outset of revelation we are distinctly brought face to face with the fact that there is a *society*, or *association* of mankind together, which is not based upon Divine laws and truth, and which is destined to end in

[1] See "Newton on the Prophecies," vol. i. pp. 15–18.
[2] See Lange's "Commentary on Genesis," Trans. pp. 337–8.

confusion, conflict, and ultimate destruction, being superseded by that better form of human life and human fellowship which is revealed from the first in the Scriptures, and ultimately becomes the special subject of prophecy in the Apocalypse. Who can read the history of the world and the history of religion, and not see that the description of Babel and the judgments of God upon it is a prophecy which has been ever more and more fulfilled, and which is destined to receive a still larger fulfilment hereafter? That such a record should be placed in Genesis, is a foreshadowing of the conflict between the true Church and the ungodly world, which only the Divine mind could have thus depicted, in a few powerful touches, significant of the whole secret of human history.

III. Period: from the call of Abraham to the bondage of Israel in Egypt (Gen. xii. to l.), including a period of probably three hundred years, to the death of Jacob.

As a considerable portion of Scripture is connected with this period, it will not be possible, in this summary review of the argument, to do more than briefly indicate the chief features of the prophetic revelations of that time. The leading points of prophecy during the time of the three patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are—1. The *double covenant* to the descendants of Abraham, and to the world through him. 2. *The promise of an heir*, a seed in whom all the nations should be blessed. 3. The prediction of *the bondage in Egypt* and the subsequent deliverance from it. 4. The *prophetic benediction of Jacob* upon his sons and their descendants, foretelling in rough outline their future history. 5. The special distinction of *the tribe of Judah* and promise of supremacy and royalty in that line, fulfilled in the person of *the Messiah*. There are many minor instances of fulfilled prophecy to which we cannot refer, such as the birth of Isaac, the destiny of Ishmael, the history of Joseph.

"We have here," says Davison (p. 89), "the first point of union, in prophecy, of the two dispensations, the Jewish and the Christian: and from this era prophecy takes up

and preserves a twofold character, related to them both. The possession of the land of Canaan by Abraham's offspring, now promised, identifies itself with the establishment of the Hebrew people; thereby it leads us into that dispensation which includes the law of Moses; the extraordinary superintendence of the theocracy over that people; with the authentic transmission of the Divine promises and revelations in one line by their hands down to the era of the gospel." This is one fact of the Divine economy resting on the promise of the land of Canaan. With regard to the second and greater, the universal blessing of the human race, it is the original promise made to our first parents repeated and confirmed, with this provision annexed, that the blessing of the human kind, the blessing "of all nations of the earth," should spring from the succession of the Jewish patriarch. And as our Saviour explained the faith of Abraham, when He said, "Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it, and was glad," no doubt we are to understand that the patriarch beheld that day of Christ through the medium of that same promise which we are now considering; perhaps in other ways; but unquestionably by this prediction, that "in thy seed all nations of the earth should be blessed." "It was too plain, in the time of Abraham, that the 'serpent's head' had not been broken; there were no signs in the Flood, nor in anything before it or after it, that the worst evil of the Fall had been done away. The moral interdict, the primeval sentence, therefore, remained; and when a general blessing to extend to all the nations of the earth was revealed, it could not be understood otherwise than as applying to the redemption of man from the state of condemnation into which he had passed. The *evil* and the *blessing* were to explain each the other." That the promise of a seed to Abraham was immediately connected with the more general promise of a blessing for the whole world, we can scarcely doubt, as we read the history, and is the foundation on which St. Paul and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews build up their reasoning to show that there was

a faith in the patriarch which anticipated the fulness of gospel privilege: "In Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Gen. xxi. 12). The trial of Abraham, recorded in ch. xxii., was not a mere personal trial, in order to the development of his confidence in God and obedience to Divine commandments, but it was doubtless intended to surround the promise of blessing through his seed with special solemnity, God thus preserving the son, the only son, as it were by a miracle. Connecting such facts with the subsequent development of revelation, how is it possible to doubt that the Spirit of God spake to the patriarch, and that the record is not of man, but of God?

In the prediction of the bondage in Egypt we have an instance of direct prophecy literally fulfilled. The only possible escape from the conclusion, that such a prediction was divinely given to Abraham, lies in a denial of the authenticity of the Book of Genesis, and a charge of gross deceit upon the writer, whoever the writer was, whether Moses or any other, who interpolated the passage in question. That Moses himself should be capable of such imposture is incredible. That the book should be corrupted in the course of transmission, and should receive into it additions deliberately intended to deceive, being put in the form of Divine predictions, but inserted after the time to which the predictions referred, is of course a conceivable theory; but it would prove too much, for the whole book of Genesis is so pervaded by the same prophetic spirit, that if one prediction be renounced, there would still remain the general character of the book to be accounted for. Only the perversity of an extreme criticism would see any reason for rejecting the genuineness of the prophecy in its exact fulfilment. In Gen. xv. 13–15, in immediate connection with the record of visions given to Abraham and the covenant to bestow the land of Canaan upon his descendants, the prediction of the bondage in Egypt is found; and the words are so unmistakable in their clearness that they must be accepted as a proof of foresight or rejected as spurious: "*And He said unto Abram, Know of a*

surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." We may put beside this prophecy that given to Jacob recorded Gen. xlvi. 2, 3, in which the land of bondage is named as Egypt: "*God spake unto Israel in visions of the night; and said, I am God, the God of thy fathers; fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again.*" Is it at all probable that if both these predictions were insertions at a later period, after the Exodus, they would have been so perfectly simple in their character and so exactly corresponding with the facts of the case? Might we not have expected that in the earlier prediction made to Abraham more would have been included? The coincidence of the history with the prediction to Jacob is perfectly natural. Famine sent him to Egypt, and the name of the strange land would be introduced most fitly when the finger-post of Providence seemed to be pointing to it. The mind of the patriarch Jacob required support, under the uncertainties and perplexities of his journey to Egypt. The renewal of the covenant to him, with the distinct prediction of the purpose of God concerning his descendants, must be admitted to be in entire accordance with the facts of the history. It is a monstrous theory that, both in the case of Abraham and in the case of Jacob, we are dealing with a falsified record, the product of centuries later. In that case we must suppose the whole Jewish people acquiescing in a fraud, which not only could be detected, but would be at that time without reason. The whole volume of revelation would be made to rest upon a foundation of falsehood. That such prophecies should be fulfilled, if they were actually given as we find them recorded, implies a foresight of events which

were certainly beyond all possible anticipation by human calculation, and that marvellous co-working of Divine power with the history of the seed of Abraham, which was promised. "Threescore and ten persons, comprising the family of Jacob, were the beginnings of this people; famine and exile the preparations of its greatness. But the seed of a nation, thus sown in weakness, was raised in power. Consider by what steps it was so raised. The men were shepherds; 'they were all men of cattle;' and 'every shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians.' It is of moment to observe this historical fact; because the circumstances in it which looked to be most adverse to the fulfilment of the Divine prediction, did eventually conduce to and almost prepare the way for it. First of all, their occupation and habits of life as shepherds, were a reason for a separate place being given to them to inhabit, the land of Goshen, the best fitted to their use. Next, the prejudices and antipathy of the Egyptians to their pastoral character, acted as a constant principle of separation to preserve the selected race in union with itself and unmingled with the mass of their indigenous, but, to them, alien fellow-subjects. The land of Goshen, covered with its cattle, in a country principally devoted, as Egypt always has been, to the labour of tillage, and the inhabitants of that pastoral oasis, fenced in, like their own flocks, within a separate pale and fold, by the very hatred of the people who had given them a reception, wore a character of their own, and gave signs of the purposes which the Almighty Shepherd was preparing to bring out of such beginnings, when He should 'lead the people forth like sheep,' as He afterwards did, 'by the hand of Moses and Aaron'; and bring them, according to His promise, to their land of rest. Prophecy, therefore, seems to have entered into a course of preparation to its accomplishment, though with adverse and contradictory appearances, from the instant of the settlement in Egypt, which began with clear and distinct predictions of its *long period* of continuance, of the *bondage* of the adopted race, of their *increase*, of their

deliverance, and their *restoration* to Canaan in the power of a *great* people."[1]

In th forty-ninth chapter of Genesis we have a collection of prophetic utterances which were the last words of Jacob among his sons. "*And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days. Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father*" (ver. 1, 2). The same general remarks apply in this instance as in those just referred to. So important a passage could not be interpolated; could not be a fiction inserted by such a man as Moses; would not have been of the character it is, poetic and mysterious while still predictive, had it been intended to impose upon the reader. The general scope of the prophecy is clear. It points to the land of Canaan and the distribution of the twelve tribes. It describes their history as tribes, under poetic figures, marking their peculiarities, as well as their geographical restrictions. As to the mere prediction of the tribal distribution, apart from all details, it was "a great *undertaking* of prophecy. The common calculation of human life would not have warranted such a promise, at least in any times of the world with which we are acquainted. For if an inheritance were to be apportioned upon the contingency of a several male offspring in a numerous and multiplied distant issue, to twelve sons of a family, I believe it will be allowed to be an event highly improbable that such a disposition of the inheritance should in all its branches take effect. But here the grant was from the almighty Disposer, and prophecy relied upon intentions not to be defeated."[2] It is remarkable that Jacob should have uttered this prophecy when circumstances seemed to point to a permanent settlement in Egypt, and the position of Joseph to their future prosperity there. It is natural that the prophecy should come from the dying lips of the patriarch, from a death-bed full of faith and hope, from one to whose keeping the primitive promise had been entrusted of a blessing

[1] Davison, pp. 110–11. [2] Ibid., p. 112.

on the descendants of Abraham and on the world through them.

The division and arrangement of tribes being distinctly recognised and made the basis of a new prophecy, the next point which has to be noticed is that the one tribe of Judah is distinguished and elevated above the others, and with it is connected that primitive promise of a Redeemer, which from age to age was receiving a larger and fuller development. "*Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: his eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk*" (Gen. xlix. 8–12). Admitting that there are critical difficulties in this passage, as, *e.g.*, in the word "*Shiloh*," still it will not be denied that it predicts a "prolonged duration of some public power of the tribe of Judah, as distinguished from the rest, and the cessation of that power" at some point of time, which the Jews for ages believed to be the coming of Messiah; that "*the families of the earth*" should gather in some way to Judah, and find their blessedness in his abundance of wine and milk, *i.e.*, in his choice spot of Canaan, "the land of vines and milk and honey." "Jacob calls him who was to come by the mysterious name of Shiloh. Commentators have given themselves unnecessary trouble about the exact objective point indicated by the word. It may refer to the great Deliverer, or to the great deliverance that would characterize His coming. The closest examination of this anomalous form shows that, in some way, there enters into every aspect of it, whether as proper name, or as epithet, the idea of peace, stillness, gentleness, and yet of mighty

power. Why does the dying man speak this unusual word Shiloh? Unusual then,—perhaps before unuttered,—unusual since in the form it takes, although the verbal root is more common. A reason can hardly now be given for it. It was, most likely, a strange, if not wholly unknown, name to those who then heard it uttered. We can trace it to no antecedents. It was a wondrous, a mysterious name. A startling dreamlike character pervades the whole chapter, with its sudden transitions, its rapt outpourings, its quick changes of scene, defying all the canons of any mere rhetorical or poetical criticism; but this vision-aspect appears especially in the unexpected coming in of this remarkable word Shiloh, and the extraordinary use that is made of it. The patriarch himself, perhaps, could not have explained how or why he used it, or in what way it came to him, whether by some conscious association, or as having its birth in a sudden arresting of the mind by some new and wondrous thought, like that which prompted the strange ejaculation in verse 18: '*I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord.*'" [1] The old Jewish, old Catholic, and old Protestant interpretation is that *Shiloh* is the abstract for the concrete, "*the author of tranquillity*," that is, the Messiah. Hengstenberg, Schroeder, Keil, Hofmann and others, coincide with this view in modern times. The only other interpretations worthy of notice are those which either take Shiloh as the name of a place, "*until he come to Shiloh*," or separate the word into two, "*which to him*," *i.e.*, *until he comes to whom it belongs*, *i.e.*, the sceptre, which is not inconsistent with the Messianic view. Both of these, however, must yield in probability to the older interpretation. Whether the name itself be retained as a prediction or not, it is difficult to evade the force of the whole passage as a promise of special blessing through Judah, in which all the people of the earth should share. This, as uttered before the time of Moses and before the possession of Canaan, argues Divine foresight.

As to the general obscurity of these patriarchal prophecies

[1] Lange's Commentary on Genesis. Excursus. p. 652.

it is well to remember, as Davison has remarked, "that apart from the actual disclosure of the future, prophecy would have a direct use in exciting inquiry and hope and a desire of further knowledge; and these are exercises of the habit and disposition of religion; and they are as much so as the principles of a more resolved, a more instructed faith. The evangelical prophecies, therefore, in whatever measure they were given, were a direction to faith in its views, and an inducement to the further exercise of its habit, when the prospects of it were less clear. It was an act of religion in prophets, and in patriarchs, to desire to see the things which yet they did not see, or were permitted to see only '*as through a glass darkly*.'" [1] "The more illuminated portions of prophecy received the earliest fulfilment. The darker portions remained, to become less dark as the light of succeeding ages fell upon them. Ancient prophecy predicted Canaan; but it penetrated beyond, to the Redeemer; while anterior notices of Him, preceding the law, show the constant and pre-eminent designation made of Him from the beginning. When He came into the world, He had His signs before Him. He came only as God had 'spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began'" (Luke ii. 70).[2]

IV. Period: from the Bondage in Egypt to the settlement in Canaan.

This includes the whole teaching of the Pentateuch after the time of Jacob, *i.e.*, the ministry of Moses, who doubtless gathered up into his writings the traditional doctrines and prophecies of the preceding ages. We must limit our attention, in this general argument, to a few of the more prominent instances to be found in the Mosaic books after the time of the patriarchs.

The Mosaic economy followed the period of Egyptian bondage. Whatever preparation there may have been during the four hundred years of the people's residence in Goshen for the subsequent constitution of their national life in Canaan, still it

[1] Page 117. [2] Ibid., p. 121.

must be admitted that Moses was the chief agent in the establishment of their moral and ceremonial law. As such, he received special Divine guidance. He made all things according to the pattern received in the mount. Now the law, both moral and ceremonial, was full of prophetic reference to the future. The history of the people of Israel, and the development of the Old Testament revelation, through both institutions and men, must be acknowledged to be the outcome of that beginning of the national existence which is stated to have been so entirely under Divine superintendence and inspiration. Moses was not a mere student of Egyptian wisdom, not a mere man of genius producing a system of legislation by the sagacious forecasts of his own mind. The only possible explanation of the wonderful purity and success of the Mosaic law, is that it was in perfect correspondence with the past history of the people and with the demands of their future. To represent Moses as anticipating, by mere human calculation, the working out of such a system as we find in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, and so exactly adapting it to the religious needs of future generations, is to make a greater demand upon the reason than that which is made by the statements of the Scriptures. The unity of the revelation is manifest, the shadow and the substance of the good things alike testifying to the Divine wisdom, which was equally in the earlier and in the later stages of the one progressive development of truth. The law is a prophecy of the gospel, the gospel is a fulfilment of the law. The personal history of Moses supplies us with instances of fulfilled prophecy. The commission which he received, to deliver the children of Israel out of the hand of Pharaoh, was accompanied with direct promises of miraculous vouchsafements and ultimate complete success. The whole subsequent history, the obstinacy of the king, the judgments on the land of Egypt, the favour given to the people of Israel in the sight of the Egyptians, the settlement of their nation in the "*good land and large, the land flowing with milk and honey*," after the driving out of the Canaanitish nations, the observance of the

passover to all future generations as a commemoration of the redemption promised, all was foretold to Moses, and to the whole body of Israelites while as yet they were mere bond-slaves, without discipline or military power of any kind, and all was literally accomplished. To represent Moses as writing down such predictions in the book of Exodus untruthfully, or to suppose them to be nothing more than legendary and poetical additions to the history, is to trifle with the facts. Either the history is false, or the prophecies, which are inseparably mingled with it, are genuine. They stand and fall together.

Coming to more specific instances of oracular prediction, we may refer to the announcement made by Moses (Deut. xviii. 15–18), that the Lord would raise up from among their brethren another Prophet, like unto him and yet different. The occasion of the prediction was the complaint of the people that the terrors of Sinai were too great for them. "They asked an intermediate messenger between God and them, who should temper the awfulness of His voice, and impart to them His will in a milder way. In answer to this their prayer, God declares that they had well spoken, and that He would accordingly raise up unto them a Prophet conformable to their desire. How aptly the prophecy, so modified, agrees with the compassionate mildness and condescension of the Christian revelation, both in the spirit of that revelation and the mode of its delivery, any one must immediately see; or St. Paul may lead him to see it, in the contrast which he has drawn between the law and the gospel, in the principle of their terrific and attractive characters, opposed as they are the one to the other; or the Sermon on the Mount, which is Christ's promulgation of His law, compared with the thunders of Sinai, may satisfy him of the justness of the prophecy."[1] The Jews certainly believed that the prediction had reference to the Messiah, as we see by the evidence of the New Testament, where "*the prophet that should come into the world*," "*that pro-*

[1] Davison, p. 162.

phet," "*He of whom Moses in the law did write*," are expressions taken from the common language of the people; and both the apostle Peter (Acts iii. 22) and Stephen (Acts vii. 37) refer directly to the passage in Deuteronomy, quoting the very words and applying them to Christ, which they would scarcely have ventured to do unless they were following the accepted interpretation of their day.

Another instance in the ministry of Moses may be found in the proclamation of blessing and curse made to the people on the borders of the promised land. This example of fulfilled prophecy is taken up at considerable length by Davison.[1] The predictions concerning the destinies of the Jewish people do indeed run through the Old Testament; but the most striking case, in view of our argument, is the anticipation in the book of Deuteronomy, both of their departure from Jehovah and election of a king, and of their subsequent degradation and exile. We can scarcely doubt that in this instance the prophecy long preceded the event, for as Davison has remarked: "The division of the monarchy of Israel, after the death of Solomon, placed the books of Moses under the custody of an hostile and acrimonious schism in religion between the two kingdoms of Judah and Samaria; and Samaria, acknowledging the Pentateuch as the basis of its religion, though with a very corrupted and heretical faith, bore a second and yet more than independent testimony to the antiquity and authenticity of the Mosaic records and prophecies; most certainly to the authenticity of those portions of the Pentateuch which are, in the very tenor of its text, explicitly ascribed to Moses as their author. Such are all those connected with the publication of the law."[2] A general prophecy of calamity and ultimate national decay might perhaps be regarded as the foresight of a wise observer of human frailty and the world's vicissitudes, but in the case of the predictions of Moses, compared with the facts of the Jewish history, it is impossible to attribute the language employed to mere human wisdom. Deut. xxviii. 64:

[1] Discourse IX., p. 435, etc. [2] Ibid., pp. 436–7.

"*The Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other. . . . And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind*"; with many other similar words.

"*Dispersion* has been the fate of the Jewish people in a manner and degree in which it has befallen no other people. From the period of their first overthrow, or rather, from the first mutation and decline of their commonwealth, it has pursued them to the present day. It has been the habit under which they have existed, in ten of their tribes, or in all, for seventeen hundred years, or for twenty-five hundred. It is not a bare desolation of their land, nor desolation with the exhaustion and disappearance of the people from their original home; but a driving of them to the four winds of heaven, superadded to the local calamities; of an exterminating vengeance which makes the peculiarity of their fate and of the prediction of it. Other and long-settled nations may have been driven from their native country; of which, however, in nations of the scale and strength of the Hebrew people it will not be easy to name the second example; but such a devious dispersion, and such a perpetuity of it, are strictly unparalleled. For where is the other country in the world, and in what quarter of it, which lies so vacant, so thinly occupied, whilst its proper race are to be seen everywhere else; they and it divided; a solitary soil, and a displaced, distracted population, abounding anywhere rather than in their own land? In that divided state they remain; present in all countries, and with a home in none; intermixed, and yet separated; and neither amalgamated nor lost; but like those mountain streams which are said to pass through lakes of another kind of water and keep a native quality to repel commixtion, they hold communication without union, and may be traced, as rivers without banks, in the midst of the alien element which surrounds them." [1]

[1] Davison, pp. 442–3.

Another remarkable prophecy is that made through the Midianitish prophet Balaam, the son of Beor, recorded in Num. xxiii., xxiv. Summoned by the king of Moab to pronounce a curse on the strange "people come out of Egypt, covering the face of the earth," Balaam, under the controllin influence of the Spirit of God, pronounced a blessing on them. "*The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel?*" (xxiii. 9, 10). "*The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them. God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn. Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought! Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain.*"[1] And, after other predictions of the future greatness of Israel, "*he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: he hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the Most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly. Out of Jacob shall come He that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city*" (xxiv. 15–19). "Some have sought the Star and the Sceptre of Balaam's prophecy, where they cannot well be found, in the reign of David (though even then the supernatural foresight must be admitted), for though a sceptre might be there, the Star properly is not; and perhaps that vision of the prophet's mind carried far into futurity, '*I shall see Him,*

[1] *Cf.* Gen. xlix. 9 and 27.

but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh,' is expressive of something more than an ideal vision, the mirror of prophecy; perhaps it is nothing less than the mysterious foreboding of that real sight which we shall all have in beholding Him who is the chief object of prophecy, when 'He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him' (Rev. i. 7). But whatever degree of completion this prophecy may be thought to have received in the reign of David, it is clearly no more than in those points of view wherein the kingdom of David is emblematic of the dominion of Christ. And if its sense could possibly be thought to reach no farther than to the scene of David's reign, even so it would have in part the effects ascribed to it, in raising the expectation of some considerable display of God's providence beyond the law; and when one prophecy had brought men to the age of David, they would not be able to stop there, for then they would find other predictions opening the designs of God to a greater extent. This, indeed, is a principle of ancient prophecy, that it was constantly advancing, in some or other of its prospects, till the point of rest was given to so many of them, in the advent and religion of Christ."[1] The application is made to the Messiah by the Chaldee paraphrast and by the Jerusalem Targum. Maimonides took it as partly applicable to David and partly to the Messiah. But that it was a mysterious prediction of the future was admitted by all the Jews, and can scarcely be denied.

V. Period: from the settlement in Canaan to the establishment of the Monarchy.

This period embraces the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and part of the first book of Samuel. Prophecy was almost silent during these years, a space of about four centuries. There was a general promise of Divine protection and blessing to Israel, but no direct predictions are recorded. That there was not only a lack of record, but of the gift of prophecy, has been concluded from the following considerations: 1. The

[1] Davison, pp. 160–1.

silence itself. 2. The union of Samuel with Moses, when the ancient prophets and servants of God come to be remembered together (Jer. xv. 1). 3. By the implication of St. Paul, who reckons the government of the *Judges* to Samuel the prophet as distinguished from them (Acts xiii. 20). 4. By the historic text, which informs us that "the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision" (1 Sam. iii. 1). The case of Deborah is no exception, for her inspiration was poetic and connected with her position as a judge; she probably uttered no predictions. Probably the cessation of prophecy for a while was ordered by God, that the authority of the law might be the more clearly established. The light of Providence was sufficient without the extraordinary aid of prophetic intimations, and led the people the more eagerly to welcome the fuller bestowments of a later age.

VI. Period: from the beginning of the Monarchy to the Revolt of the Ten Tribes.

This period includes a length of time extending over one hundred and twenty-one years; and to it may be referred the Scriptures contained in 1 Sam. xiii.–xxxi., 2 Sam., 1 Kings i.–xi., 1 Chron., and 2 Chron. i.–ix., and some of the poetical books; many of the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.

The leading fact in this period is the establishment by the prophet Samuel of the schools of the prophets, and the commencement of an order of acknowledged prophets whose mission was regarded as divinely authorized, and whose writings are in many instances preserved in the prophetic Scriptures, to the time of Malachi, when the order ceased, and there was a period of silence as during the time of the Judges. During this period, as a whole, from Samuel to Malachi, it may be said that every remarkable change in the history of the Jewish people was in some way anticipated by predictions. The stream of prophecy is not only continuous, but widening in its application with every generation. It branches out in different directions, and embraces within its scope not only the history

of the Jews, but that of heathen nations, in so far as they were connected with the people of God and the higher spiritual theme of the kingdom of Messiah. "The simple restricted Jewish subject comes first, as in the predictions of Samuel. The Jewish and Christian are not combined, as in the prophecies of David and Isaiah. Afterwards the Christian and Pagan are clearly and formally connected in the prophecies of Daniel; while all these subjects, either apart or in union, are filled up from time to time, with various accessories of prediction extending on every side the range of the revelation." The call of Samuel to the prophetic office was a very solemn one, because he was the appointed leader and first establisher of the prophetic order. He was to effect a great religious, as well as political, reformation in Israel. From childhood he was the recipient of Divine communications, and "a train of exact prediction, first communicated to Eli by a man of God, and then to the child Samuel in a vision (1 Sam. iii. 11), foreshowed the judgment of God in the excision of Eli and his house, the speedy fulfilment of which prophecy, with other present signs of his mission, '*made all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, know that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord.*'" "*The Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.*"

During the time of Samuel's government over Israel there was no special call for prediction; but when he became old, and his sons were made judges, corruption and injustice increased to such an extent that "all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations." By Divine direction Samuel yielded to the wish of the people, but in the name of the Lord he rebuked their folly and predicted its consequences, which were afterwards fully realized. "And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some

shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day" (1 Sam. viii. 11–18). Had this been a mere general forecast of the evil of monarchy, we might ascribe it to the sagacity of an old and experienced man, but it is too definite and detailed for such an origin. It is described as "*the words of the Lord*" which Samuel told the people. The first king, Saul, was elected under especial Divine guidance, as "*the Lord had told Samuel in his ear a day before.*" When Saul is rejected for his transgression, the same special Divine direction selects the youth David, while he is still keeping his father's flock, to be his successor. It was intended to be a public attestation to the authority of Samuel, and the truth of God's word as given through him, that David should not attain the throne of Israel till long after the prophet's death, and at a time remote from the prediction. "The second appointment, therefore, was a signal prediction given by Samuel, and exhibited in the act of anointing: a prediction that the youngest of the seven sons of Jesse, a retired Bethlehemite, and he then living a shepherd, unknown and secluded in the privacy of his father's house, and depressed below the consideration and respect of his own brethren, was the heir of the kingdom of Israel. By a series of events, following in the ordinary course of Providence, without any miracle interposed,

this prediction was brought to pass. David was raised to his divinely appointed station, when his shepherd's staff became a sceptre, and his flock a great people; none contributing more to the preparation of this event than Saul himself, who in his jealousy sought to destroy the faithful friend he had called forth, but whose hostility placed him in the way to power by the necessities of a just self-defence; the decree of prophecy turning the counsels of Saul to counterwork their object."[1] The time of Saul's death and its manner were also foretold, and that of his sons, in the mysterious vision which was sent to Saul through the witch of Endor.[2] "Yet with all their adaptation to the circumstances of the time, it could not be said of those predictions that they were framed under favour of those circumstances, or after the bent and leading of them. For the prophet was subjected to this test: his adverse predictions concerning Eli and Saul, the priesthood and the throne, he delivered in the face of their power; his favourable prediction respecting David he bequeathed to the hope of a distant and improbable fulfilment. His first prophecies challenged a jealous scrutiny; his last was placed beyond the command of his influence and direction. In each case, the authority of the prophet was strictly tried."[3]

After the time of Samuel, through the prophet Nathan and others, the predictions were full and frequent, and concerned both the civil and religious prospects of the people. Take, *e.g.*, such an instance as that recorded in 2 Sam. vii. 12–17, compared with the 89th Psalm. The reign of David was not one of peace, and the prospects of the kingdom were far from established. To predict what should follow such a reign was certainly beyond human foresight; yet thus distinctly and particularly did the voice of prophecy proclaim what should be the future of the throne, and, at the same time, how the kingdom of David should be the fulfilment of the primitive promise of blessing to the world, through

[1] Davison. [2] See 1 Sam. xxviii. 16–20. [3] Davison, p. 199.

the spiritual glory coming forth in it. "*When thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: but My mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever. According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.*" "In the person of David, prophecy makes some of its greatest revelations. In him, as in Abraham, the temporal and the evangelical predictions are united. His reign is one cardinal point of their union, and of the entire scheme of prophecy in its double character. He was made a prophet himself, inspired to reveal many of the Christian promises, and there were no such significant disclosures made of them since the days of Abraham and the patriarchs, nor perhaps even then. For what have we in the prophetic Psalms (and those all, or most of them, ascribed to David), but an assemblage of many of the most considerable attributes of the reign and religion of the Messiah foreshown? There is a King set upon the holy hill of Zion; His law; the opposition made to Him by the kings of the earth; their rage defeated; His extraordinary sceptre of righteousness; His unchangeable Priesthood; His Divine worship; His exalted nature; His death and early resurrection outrunning the corruption of the grave; His dominion embracing both Israel and the Gentile world"[1] (Psalms ii., xvi., xlv., cx., also lxxxix. and others). The poetic form of prophecy at this period, when its predictions became fuller and more spiritual, was adapted to its preservation in the minds of the people, being taken up into their devotional life, both public and private. It is also to be re-

[1] Davison, pp. 206–7.

marked that the same Nathan who predicted the future greatness of David's royal line, also foretold the Divine rebuke of his sin. And, in the same way, when Solomon forsook the ways of righteousness, prophecy pronounced upon him the sentence of Divine judgment. 1 Kings xi. 11–13 : "*Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David My servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen*" (*cf.* also ver. 34). The event thus foretold was of the greatest importance, and it was prepared for by the voice of God with the utmost solemnity and speciality of prediction. "But for that information, the event might have seemed to be a catastrophe without hope; to break up the federal character of the chosen people; to interrupt, or confound, the transmission of the covenant under which they had been embodied. By the intimations previously given, all these points were adjusted; at least they were sufficiently cleared as to that which would be the first and principal object of a believer's attention, either then or now, the course of the Divine economy."[1] If it be alleged that the revolt of the ten tribes might have been foreseen, it may be replied that during the prosperous and peaceful reign of Solomon, when the prediction was uttered, such an event could not have been anticipated, and it was the oppressive government of Rehoboam which really made the occasion. "But suppose that this incident of the change, the separation of the ten tribes, taken alone, was not a test of clear supernatural prescience in the days of Ahijah; how will the case stand? That disposition of the tribes which united them together, and opposed them to Judah, was created and ripened, no doubt, by moral or occasional causes influencing the passions

[1] Davison, p. 251.

and conduct of human agents, although we have not these causes particularly explained. It illustrates, therefore, in a signal manner, the prescience of that older prophecy of Jacob, given so many hundred years before, which separated the tribe of Judah to some destination *above* the rest, and *apart* from the rest; since nothing could prepare so well for the fulfilment of those restricted promises verging to the favour of that single tribe, as the very disposition of union and jealousy. What might be doubtful as a sign of Divine foreknowledge in one age of prophecy, is a more pregnant proof of it in another. Let the arrangement of things, which issued in the division of the kingdom, pass for an object of human calculation in the days of Solomon. What is it when viewed from the death-bed of Jacob in Egypt?"[1]

As to the prophetic teaching of the Psalms and other poetical books, we must remember that there were schools of the prophets established in the land, and that the people from the time of Samuel would be trained by public teaching to understand the deeper meanings of the words uttered in their hearing and preserved in the writings of the prophets. It is said to have been an acknowledged principle among the Jews that the language of the Psalms, if it could not be regarded as entirely fulfilled in the time of David and Solomon, was predictive of Messiah. As the course of prophecy was developed, the devout Israelite would find opportunity to compare previous predictions with their fulfilments, and thus from age to age the foundation would be enlarged on which the student of Scripture would stand. There were promises given to the patriarchs; these contained predictions of blessing for the Gentile world and the universality of Messiah's kingdom; as the new predictions of the Psalms were uttered, this large spiritual scope of the more ancient promises would lift up the thoughts of believers, and they would see in the language of the psalmist what would otherwise have escaped them. It may be truly said of the Messianic Psalms that they

[1] Davison.

"presented a perfect drama of Messiah's coming story." From the time of Solomon onwards, prophecy had the outline to fill in and the colours to deepen, but all the most essential features of Messiah were depicted during the great period of the monarchy. The prophets, who were afterwards sent to the troubled people, to Judah and to Israel and to the captives, when they were undergoing the judgment sent upon them, itself a fulfilment of prophecy, expanded the message and filled it with comfort, and made it at once the vindication of Divine righteousness and the invitation of Divine mercy. After the revolt of the ten tribes the subjects of prophecy become very varied, and extend much beyond the limits of the Jewish people.

VII. Period: from the revolt of the ten tribes to the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities.

From B.C. 974 to B.C. 721 and 606, about three and a half centuries, the period of the greater prophets; including the scriptures contained in 1 Kings xii. to 2 Kings; 2 Chron. x.–xxxvi.; *Hosea, Amos, Jonah, Joel, Obadiah, Micah, Isaiah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Jeremiah.*

The prophetic denunciation of the idolatrous altar at Bethel and the attendant circumstances (1 Kings xiii.). Jeroboam the son of Nebat made Israel to sin. Prophecy immediately proclaimed the Divine sentence upon that sin. The idol altar in Bethel, as soon as it was reared, had its sentence of condemnation written upon it. Whilst the king was in the act of hallowing it to its profane service, at its first festival, it fell by prophecy: its pollution was foretold by name, and it was desecrated, in prediction, with the ashes of its own priests. "*Behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the Lord unto Bethel: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. And he cried against the altar in the word of the Lord, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee.*" To give solem-

nity to this denunciation, and to surround the offence of idolatry with special signs of Divine displeasure, Jeroboam's hand is withered when he put it forth from the altar against the prophet, and healed again on his repentance and the prophet's entreaty on his behalf. A sign was given : the altar was rent and the ashes poured out as the prophet predicted. The prophet is commanded to eat no food in the polluted spot, and is visited with judgment from the Lord for going aside from the commandment. Such circumstances "heightened the prophetic warning, and enforced it upon men's senses and attention."

Now this prophecy concerning the altar in Bethel was fulfilled three hundred and fifty years afterwards, the people of Israel during that whole time, through their kings, maintaining the same idolatrous and wicked state. We read (2 Kings xxiii. 15, 16) of King Josiah : "*Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, and stamped it small to powder, and burned the grove. And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that were there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned them upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the Lord which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words.*" The force of this evidence of Divine foreknowledge, a prediction made three and a half centuries before being literally and exactly fulfilled, can only be evaded by throwing doubt on the authenticity of the book in which both the prophecy and the history are recorded. In the absence of any criterion by which the genuineness of so ancient a book can be really tried, we must largely depend upon the tradition of the Jewish Church. The critical objections of the modern school are so much the product of an *à priori* rejection of the supernatural, that they cannot be allowed to avail against the authority of the Jewish tradition. To suppose a writer of the history of the Kings deliberately inventing the earlier passages containing the prediction, or a transcriber inserting the name of Josiah, or the

writer of the later passage, containing the fulfilment of the prophecy, simply foisting in the particulars for the sake of making out a case of exact correspondence, is a mere shift of the unbeliever, unwilling to admit the plain inference, that a prediction was literally fulfilled three hundred and fifty years after it was first uttered, and therefore that the word of God was an inspired word which supernaturally foretold future events. That such a prophecy should be given at such a time, and should receive such a fulfilment, is in perfect accordance with the circumstances of the case and the Divine method of procedure. "It was a timely remonstrance with the separated parts of God's people upon the crime which became the chief source and spring of their growing corruptions, and thereby the cause of their reprobation, miseries, and ruin. The remonstrance was planted upon the public ground and scene of their offence; a memorial of reproof which might constantly meet the transgressor whenever he came before the forbidden altar." But, considering the relation of the two kingdoms, and their strifes and jealousies, is it likely that such a prophecy, so public, and so solemn, and concerning the very central point of the religious system of Israel, would have remained for centuries unchallenged, had it been wholly the invention of a Jewish scribe? Would not the very hollowness of such a deception have made it impossible among the people of Judah? Would such men as those who drew up the canon of the Old Testament—Ezra, Nehemiah, and their fellow-labourers of the great synagogue—have sanctioned such an imposture? It is to every candid mind more incredible than any supernatural fulfilment of prophecy can be. Those who can only rid themselves of the evidence of inspiration by boldly denying the authenticity of the sacred book, involve themselves in greater difficulties than they escape.

The remarks of Davison, on the providential preservation of prophetic evidence, will have weight with all who are not committed to a critical theory, a theory which sets the *à priori* idea of what might be expected to be found in Scripture, against the

plain statements of the documents as they have come down to us: "The dismemberment of the Hebrew nation became *one safeguard of prophetic evidence.* The people of Samaria professed to hold the law of Moses and to receive the Pentateuch. The predictions contained in the Pentateuch were thereby placed under a jealous and divided care. The jealous feeling would be addressed most of all to those predictions which concerned the fortunes of the tribe of Judah, partly delivered in those books. If the Samaritans did not receive into their canon some of the later predictions relating to the tribe, or to the family, of David, those predictions, and many others, were not on that account the less, but rather the more submitted to their scrutiny, and might have been discredited, either as to their promulgation or their fulfilment, if the eye of an enemy could have found the means of inflicting any such discredit upon them. The prophecy against the altar in Bethel has all the benefit of these invidious and hostile circumstances. That altar was set up in a spirit of schism to the Temple at Jerusalem. A prophet of Judah was sent against it; a king of Judah was proclaimed the person to pollute it. How desirable would it have been to the separatists of Samaria, and how easy, to have disproved, by a simple denial, the utterance of a prophecy in their high place, purporting to be for the affront of their country and the shame of their national worship, if no such a prophet were sent among them! This guarantee of the evidence of prophecy, in several of its chief articles, was perfect so long as the kingdom of Samaria stood. It lost much of its force when that kingdom was reduced; but there were relics of the ten tribes left in Samaria and in Judea, among whom the tradition of history and of adverse public feeling continued, who, therefore, were always some check upon the custody of that evidence. And it will be borne in mind that much of later prophecy continued to enlarge the distinction in favour of the tribe of Judah, a preference which must therefore have kept alive that kind of inquisitive attention. The same spirit was animated again by the building of the Second Temple,

which became a known object of jealousy to the Samaritan race" (see Ezra chap. iv.)[1] The judgments which were sent both upon Israel and upon Judah are said to have been in vindication of God's own word, for "The Lord testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers" (2 Kings xvii. 13).

Passing by the ministries of the two prophets Elijah and Elisha, which, while full of the signs of Divine authority committed to them, and therefore generally testifying to the word of God, afford no very special instances of recorded prediction, we come to the line of prophets whose oracles have been preserved, beginning with Hosea, and concluding the period under review with Jeremiah. It is impossible to do more, in this brief notice of the evidence of prophecy, than select a few of the more striking instances of prediction. These may be arranged under three heads. 1. Those which concerned the future of the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel. 2. Those which had reference to the surrounding Pagan nations. 3. Those which foretold the kingdom of the Messiah and the dispensation of the gospel.

1. *Predictions concerning the kingdoms of Judah and Israel.*

Hosea (B.C. 800–725) lived and exercised his prophetic ministry about sixty years, from the time of Jeroboam II. to that of Hoshea the last king of Israel. In chapter i. 4, the destruction of the kingdom of Israel is prophesied: "*I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel.*" In chapter v. 5, it is predicted that "Israel and Ephraim shall fall in their iniquity; Judah also shall fall with them." In iii. 4, 5, the judgment on the whole people is declared, and their subsequent recovery: "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and His goodness

[1] Davison, pp. 262–3.

in the latter days." While the whole book is full of the denunciations of approaching judgment, the direction from which the judgment shall come is clearly foretold: "*The glory of Samaria shall be carried unto Assyria for a present to king Jareb*" (x. 6); "*A tumult shall arise among thy people, and all thy fortresses shall be spoiled, as Shalman spoiled Beth-arbel in the day of battle: the mother was dashed in pieces upon her children*" (x. 14, and the same may be gathered from ix. 3–6); "*In a morning shall the king of Israel utterly be cut off*" (x. 15).

Amos (B.C. 810–785), contemporary with Hosea. Sixty years before the captivity of the ten tribes Amos predicted their ruin thus: "Thus saith the Lord God; An adversary there shall be even round about the land; and he shall bring down thy strength from thee, and thy palaces shall be spoiled" (iii. 11); "I will cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the Lord, whose name is The God of hosts" (v. 27); "I will raise up against you a nation, O house of Israel, saith the Lord the God of hosts; and they shall afflict you from the entering in of Hemath unto the river of the wilderness" (vi. 14). As matter of history it is recorded (vii. 10–13) that Amos said, "Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land." The same prophet foretold judgment upon Judah (ii. 4, 5): "I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem."

Joel (B.C. 810–795), addressing himself probably to Judah, wrote in a more figurative style, but plainly indicated approaching destruction in the invasion of enemies (i. 6): "A nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion." The theme of the whole prophecy is the great day of the Lord, for which the people are exhorted to prepare, and the reference in ii. 20, to "*the northern army*," which the Lord would "*drive into a land barren and desolate*" when the people repented, could leave them in no doubt whence the judgment would come. The people should be scattered and sold among the nations (iii. 2–6): "*The children of Judah*

and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border." This prediction must have been uttered some two centuries before the events referred to.

Micah (B.C. 758–699) foretells the judgment upon Israel and Judah in unmistakable language, and through the agency of an enemy who "*is come unto the gate of my people, even unto Jerusalem*" (i. 9). "*Zion shall be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest*" (iii. 12). And again the Assyrian is mentioned. "*This man* (the deliverer) *shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men*" (v. 5); and yet more distinctly in iv. 10: "Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail: for now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go even to Babylon; there shalt thou be delivered; there the Lord shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies." At the time that this prediction was delivered Babylon was a place of comparative insignificance, Nineveh being the great heathen metropolis. Micah's prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem was referred to a hundred years later in vindication of Jeremiah, and to the saving of his life from the vengeance of the princes and people; and it was then clearly stated that it was delivered in the days of Hezekiah and that Hezekiah had respected the authority of the Lord's prophet (see Jer. xxvi. 16–19). A prediction made at least a hundred years before the event was literally fulfilled.

Isaiah (B.C. 765–698). The large collection of prophecies which bear the name of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, must have been delivered at considerable intervals of time, and embrace a large variety of subjects. The predictions of the later chapters are so distinct and remarkable that the critical school of Germany, chiefly on the ground of supposed difference of style, has endeavoured to prove that the first thirty-nine chapters

are from another hand than that which wrote chapters xl. to lxvi.; but without entering here into the controversy, it may be mentioned, (1) that whatever be decided as to the later chapters, there are many predictions which are undoubtedly Isaiah's, sufficiently clear to meet the demand of the apologist that the spoken words should be palpably an utterance beyond the range of human foresight. (2) The Jews themselves, three centuries before Christ, had no doubt of the unity and integrity of Isaiah's writings (see Ecclus. xlviii. 22–25). (3) In the days of our Saviour there was no such distinction prevalent, between an earlier and a later Isaiah, as quotations occur in the New Testament from all parts of the book, without reference to any other authorship. (4) To this may be added the testimony of Josephus, which is valuable as showing the traditional belief of the Jews ("Antiq." xi. i. 2). Quoting Isaiah's prophecy respecting Cyrus in chapter xlv., he says, without a suspicion of the integrity and authenticity of the book: "This was foretold by Isaiah one hundred and forty years before the Temple was destroyed." All reasoning from supposed differences of style is precarious; whereas it is difficult for any candid reader to compare together such chapters as xii. and xxxv. in the former prophecies, and xl. and liii. in the later, and not be led to conclude that they are the production of the same highly poetic and lofty mind. On the other hand, the following reasons have been maintained against the theory that the last twenty-seven chapters were written during the time of the Babylonish captivity. (1) While ideally the prophet transfers himself to the times of the Captivity, he yet speaks as at a time when the Temple was still standing (see such passages as xliii. 22–28, where the neglect of the Temple services is charged upon the people; and compare ch. lviii. 1–7). (2) The allusions to the Chaldean invasion are sometimes in the form of predictions, and at others as ideally passed in the mind of the prophet (see ch. lvi. 9). We cannot conceive a prophet deceiving the people by writing of past events as though he were predicting them, nor can we believe that the

people would respect such writings and put them in the canon as prophetic. (3) The state of the kingdom described in the later chapters is that on which the judgments of Jehovah fell, not the state of foreign kingdoms or of captives (see lvi. 10–12; lvii. 9–13; and compare these passages with xxx. 1–5, and the whole of the rebukes of the people in the earlier chapters). The tone of the later chapters is that of denunciation of idolatrous practices and departure from God. Had they been written during the Captivity, they would not have described the people as still under the power of idolatry, for there it had been renounced under the sense of Divine displeasure.

We proceed to specify a few of the more prominent of Isaiah's predictions with regard to the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. Ch. vii. 8: "*For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people.*" About twenty years after this prediction Shalmaneser carried away the ten tribes. But the complete destruction of Israel by the expulsion of its inhabitants and the introduction of heathen colonists in their place took place in the reign of Manasseh and under Esarhaddon. (See 2 Kings xvii. 24; Ezra iv. 2–10, etc., etc.) This was exactly sixty-five years after the prediction. Compare with this prediction others of the same import in ch. viii. 4, xvii. 3–5, and the description of Israel's sin and punishment in ch. ix., x., xxviii., xxxi., etc.

The predictions in Isaiah concerning the judgments of God upon Judah and Jerusalem abound throughout the book. They are found most conspicuously in the following passages: Ch. i. 7, 8, and 21–24, 28–31; ii. 10–22; iii. 1–8; ch. v. throughout, and especially 26–30; vii. 17–25; xxiv. 1–12; xxxii. 13, 14; xxxix. 6, 7; lvi. 9; lxiv. 10, 11. The predictions of deliverance are equally clear, as in xxx. 30–33; xxxi. 8, 9, against the Assyrians; and the promise of restoration from captivity grew in distinctness as the prophet fulfilled his mission. See the general prophecy of restoration, i. 26, 27; xiv. 1–3; xxvii. 12, 13; xxxv. 8–10. In ch. xl., xli., xliii.,

xliv., xlv., xlviii., lvii., lxi., we have the deliverance described, the Persian king Cyrus named, the rebuilding of the ruined cities and Temple foretold. In the case of the prediction made to king Hezekiah (see ch. xxxix. 6, 7), "the Assyrian deliverance and the Babylonian captivity were both predicted by one and the same prophet; both foreshown to one and the same king. They make consecutive subjects in the page of prophecy. It is not clear which was delivered first; for every purpose of substantial consideration they must be taken as coming together. The prediction of the deliverance (from Sennacherib) was of an event at hand, but against all imminent appearances; the prediction of the Captivity was of an event remote, and beset by the uncertainties of time and the improbability of a present experience; for why should Babylon, a weaker and a friendly state, do that which the Assyrian, in the fulness of his power was unable, or not permitted, to do?"[1]

The prophecies of *Nahum* and *Habakkuk*, though indirectly bearing on the judgments of the Lord upon His people, concern chiefly the punishments to be inflicted on the Assyrians and the Chaldeans, and may therefore be passed by under this head. Those of *Zephaniah*, who flourished during the first seventeen years of the reign of king Josiah, previous to his great reformation in Judah, predict in the plainest possible terms the judgment upon Judah and Jerusalem—ch. i. 2, 4–6, 7–9, 12–18; iii. 1–4. The land should be laid desolate. The prince and all public officers in church and state, and all idolaters, should be judged. There should be no escape, because their iniquity was incorrigible.

Coming to the last of the prophets previous to the Captivity, *Jeremiah* (B.C. 628–585) commenced his predictions about the thirteenth year of king Josiah, a year after the time of his reformation; he witnessed the fulfilment of his own predictions in the captivity of his people; he was subject to much persecution during the reigns of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah, on account of his faith-

[1] Davison, pp. 273–4.

fulness. He prophesied for more than fifty years before the destruction of Jerusalem in 588. He was permitted by the king of Babylon to remain in the land of Judea to minister among the few remaining Jews, but was, with Baruch, carried away by his own people into Egypt, according to Jerome to Tahpanhes, where he is supposed to have been put to death by the Jews, on account of his rebukes and remonstrances against their sins. It is admittedly difficult to arrange the prophecies of Jeremiah in their order of time, and to separate those which were undoubtedly his, from such as may have been inserted by other hands. The Hebrew and Septuagint texts differ in their arrangement. Some of the prophecies were written before, and some after the destruction of Jerusalem. The last chapter is supposed by some to have been added by Ezra, as an introduction to the book of Lamentations. But as the book of Jeremiah is so full of prediction concerning the judgments of God upon Judah and Jerusalem, and as they may be said to form the chief subject of it, it will only be necessary to summarize the chief points of the predictions. These are, "that Jerusalem and the cities of Judah should be delivered into the hands of the Babylonian armies, which should desolate the land with its flocks and harvests, without any mercy, and take away the people into captivity, slaughtering an immense number of the living, and dishonouring the remains of departed kings, causing them to eat one another's flesh through the siege, and carring away the vessels of the Temple into Babylon: that the kings should suffer individually as well as the people nationally, viz., Shallum, Jehoiakim, Coniah and Zedekiah; but that after a time the Lord should receive back His unfaithful people, deliver them from Babylon, and restore them to their own land; their captivity should last only seventy years, they should then repent, return to Jehovah, be carried back to their land, become once more a joyful people, with a settled government. The people left in Palestine were exhorted not to leave their own land and go to Egypt; if they did, they would be overtaken by famine and by sword and perish; if they remained, they

would be protected and receive Divine mercy through the king of Babylon." These predictions will be found in ch. i., iv., v., vi., vii., ix., xii., xiii., xv., xvi., xix., xxi., xxii., xxiii., xxiv., xxv., xxvii., xxxii., xxxiii., xxxiv., and ch. xlii.–iv.

The following remarks of Davison will set the evidence of this whole scheme of prophecy, concerning the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah, in a forcible light. "If we take our station in the age of Isaiah, and look through his prophecies alone, we shall have the following draught of events, representing the fortunes of the two kingdoms, and reaching through a space of more than two hundred years. *First*, the prophetic scheme will present to us Samaria to be overthrown; but Judah to be preserved. Then Judah and Jerusalem, though rescued from the Assyrians, to fall into the hands of the Babylonians (or Chaldeans); a smaller and a friendly power at the date of the prediction. The catastrophe to be hopless to Samaria; so that Ephraim should be broken from being a people. The Captivity not to be hopeless to Judah, but a restoration to ensue. The person appointed to be the restorer of Judah (Cyrus) to arise in a country which was *then* not thought of among the greater subsisting kingdoms of the East (Persia). The medium of their restoration, his capture of Babylon; which capture was to be effected by a singular form of art in drying the river, and obtaining access to the gates (Isa. xlv. 2); the Medes and Persians to be the powers engaged in the siege; and all these characteristic points significantly expressed in the prediction. Lastly, the city of Jerusalem and the Temple to be rebuilt." And what is true of Isaiah is true of the other prophets mentioned above. "Here I would put the question to any person acquainted with the history of those times and countries, as preserved in independent heathen writers, and enough is preserved for the purpose of the inquiry, whether there existed in the age of the prophet Isaiah the most remote preparations discernible by human foresight for the conclusion of the order of things, which is so described by him? In particular, whether the Medo-Persian victories by Cyrus, or by any person

either of Median or Persian race, as the means of releasing Judah from Babylon, could have been foreseen, when the Median power, as we know, much more the Persian, had no existence; (the latest age of Isaiah may possibly reach the *first rudiments* of the Median kingdom, when Deioces was *beginning* to reduce it into order. Prior to which the Medes and Babylonians were subject to the Assyrian empire. Isaiah's prophesying continued into Hezekiah's reign. Hezekiah died 698 B.C. Deioces began to reign 700 B.C.;) when there was neither captivity in Babylon, nor victories of Babylon to produce it: when, in fact, the elder Assyrian power was yet in vigour, the subversion of which was only the opening to the *possibility* of the several distant changes and events foretold. One prediction of this prophet penetrates through another; and each stage of the anticipated course of things leads to more remote positions of prophecy. There is a depth and a combination of prescience in the prolonged succession of his predictions, which oblige us to ask, whence it came, whence it could come, if not from the revelation of Him "who calleth the things that are not as though they were."[1] See, for further illustration of the literal fulfilment of the predictions, "Keith on Prophecy," ch. iii., iv., and v.

2. *Predictions concerning surrounding nations.*

These predictions are very numerous, and embrace the immediately surrounding peoples, such as the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Philistines, and Syrians, and also the larger empires of Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, and the Tyrian people and power. It is not easy to test the application of the prophecies, at this distance of time, in the case of the minor states. The documents which might have thrown light upon the inquiry have been buried in the ruins of the states themselves. A few of the more remarkable predictions have, however, been considered in connection with the present state of those countries, particularly Idumea, and the general fulfilment has

[1] Davison, pp. 280–2.

been shown by Christian writers, as we see in "Keith on Prophecy," ch. v. The case of Petra is well illustrated in that work, and is a very striking instance of fulfilled prophecy. "Hidden as the history and state of Edom has been for ages, every recent disclosure, being an echo of the prophecies, amply corroborates the truth that the word of the Lord does not return unto Him void, but ever fulfils the purpose for which He hath sent it" (see Amos i. 11, 12; Isa. xxi. 11; Jer. xlix. 7, 8; Obad. 1; Ezek. xxv. 14, and xxxv.; and Burkhardt's and Wilson's accounts of their visits to Petra).

In the case of the greater kingdoms, Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, and Egypt, it will not be necessary to quote fully the verbal predictions which we find in the prophets, as they are so many, nor to follow out in detail the correspondence between the words of the Bible and the discoveries of modern travellers and historians. Every generation sees some new fact brought to light which confirms the truth and foresight of the sacred writings. But it will be well to put before the reader, in a concise form, the remarks of Davison, in which he shows that, however the general decay of these great powers might have been anticipated, there are certain special characteristics of the prophecies which forbid our ascribing them to mere human foresight.

"The predictions of the prophet *Nahum* are confined exclusively to the destruction of the kingdom and city of Nineveh. (1) One of the things foretold by him is this: '*For while they be folden together as thorns, and while they are drunken as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry*' (Nah. i. 10). (2) Another: '*The gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved*' or 'molten' (ii. 6). Each of these particulars of the prophecy is something distinctive, and each of them happens to be verified to us by the testimony of a distant and neutral witness, a heathen historian, who had it little in his thoughts, when he was transmitting such incidents of his multifarious compilation, that he was confirming the exactness of an ancient Jewish prophet. From

Diodorus Siculus,[1] who is the author here referred to, we learn that the Assyrian camp, in a state of drunkenness during a general festival, was surprised and overwhelmed. The prophet's image of their being '*folded together*' and entangled '*as thorns*,' accurately expressing the embarrassment and inability of defence in which they were involved; and the sudden mastery which was made of them, and pressed to a complete victory, being equally described in the image of '*a flame devouring the dry stubble*' and enwrapping it in an instant conflagration. From the same writer we derive this other critical circumstance, that during the siege of Nineveh, in the third year of it, an inundation of the river (which was the Tigris) caused by an excessive and continuous fall of rain, burst the walls, and laid them open, such was the magnitude of the city, to the extent of twenty stadia; upon which the king, seeing no hope of safety in defence, raised a vast pile, on which he consumed himself in the flames of his wealth and his palace.[2] Here are two articles to be noted: 'The gates of the rivers shall be opened;' so it was when the flood opened those gates of ruin in the walls; and the palace was not to be simply taken, but '*dissolved*' or '*molten*,' an incident equally marked in the prophecy and in the fact. But let us suspend our judgment of this prophecy till we have compared it with a second, that which relates to the taking of Babylon. In the two predictions we shall observe a certain manner of agreement, checked and limited by a difference adequately expressed. In both, a state of revelry and intoxication is foretold. In both cases it occurred. Speaking of Babylon, Jeremiah says: 'In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep, saith the Lord" (li. 39, 57). So far the agreement. But the same prophet fixes the instant of the surprise upon the actual capture of *Babylon*, which neither was foretold nor happened in the capture of Nineveh; for it was *the army* of Nineveh, in

[1] Lib. ii. p. 112, Ed. Rhodom., quoted by Bishop Newton.
[2] Lib. ii. p. 113.

camp before its walls, that was so surprised, before the siege had commenced. 'I have laid a snare for thee,' is the definite prediction of Jeremiah, 'and thou art also *taken, O Babylon*, and thou wast not aware: thou art found, and also caught' (l. 24). Every one knows, from the narrative of the Greek historian, that the Persian army obtained possession of Babylon by a capture of surprise, that its people were taken as in a net, and that the one part of the city knew not of the entrance of the enemy till the other part was in their power. Here there is one point of difference. A second and greater difference will add to the contrast. Each of the cities stood on a great river, Nineveh on the Tigris, Babylon on the Euphrates. These rivers were to be instrumental to the taking of them both, but in a dissimilar and even opposite manner; by an inundation in the one case, and by drying up in the other. This last particular, as to Babylon, is elaborately insisted on, again and again, in the prophecy: '*That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers*' (Isa. xliv. 27); '*A drought is upon her waters; and they shall be dried up*' (Jer. l. 38). A repetition of phrase, which by its pleonasm serves to lay the emphasis of the prophecy in the right place, upon one distinctive note of the Divine foreknowledge; for it is matter of later history that Babylon was taken in a manner corresponding with this prediction concerning her great river, when Cyrus, by a vast enterprise of stratagem, drained off the waters of the Euphrates from their channel, and so reduced them as to open a passage on foot within its banks for the entrance of his army."[1]

As to the dates, we must of course depend on the testimony of the Jewish tradition, but it may well be asked, is it possible that such an exact correspondence could have been palmed off upon the whole Jewish nation by an imposition, or that they would have conspired together, such men as Ezra and Nehemiah leading them, to put in the canon as prophecies what they knew to have been delivered after the events had occurred? Josephus places the prophecy of Nahum 115 years prior to

[1] Davison, pp. 490–3.

the event,[1] (*συνέβη δὲ πάντα τὰ προειρημένα περὶ Νινευῆς μετὰ ἔτη ἑκατὸν καὶ πεντεκαίδεκα.*) But the inspiration of the prophecies concerning the great cities may be proved, or confirmed, by a second medium, in another point of their predictions. *Zephaniah*, as to Nineveh, *Isaiah* and *Jeremiah*, as to Babylon, not only foretell the capture of the cities and the overthrow of their grandeur and empire, but they pursue the subject, with this addition, a memorable one, that the cities themselves should pass under an exterminating desolation, and be converted into a waste, a wilderness, without inhabitant, a seat of perfect solitude. *Zephaniah* (ii. 13–15): "*He will stretch out His hand against the north, and destroy Assyria; and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness. And flocks shall lie down in the midst of her, all the beasts of the nations: both the pelican (or cormorant) and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; their voice shall sing in its windows; desolation shall be in its thresholds. This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I, and none beside me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in!*" Nahum speaks the same doom more concisely, "She is empty, and void, and waste" (ii. 10). What the two other prophets have said of Babylon's desolation is equally full and expressive. Zephaniah is *stated* to have prophesied in the days of Josiah king of Judah, the last year of whose reign falls B.C. 608. But when was Nineveh taken? Herodotus assigns the capture of Nineveh to Cyaxares, and he places it after the expulsion of the Scythians from Asia (B.C. 596), which will be some years below the latest period of Zephaniah's prophesying. So far then as we can go on probable grounds, the argument will be made good, that the desolation of Nineveh was predicted before its capture. The case of Babylon is perfectly clear; its capture was long subsequent to the prophecy of its desolation.[2] "Make the most large, and indeed unwarrantable, suppositions as to

[1] "Antiq. Jud.," ix. 11.

[2] See Smith's Dict., Art. "Nineveh," and Layard's "Nineveh and its Remains."

the time of publication to be ascribed to the prophecies which speak of the final destroying of Babylon; suppose them to have been published and first known after the taking of Babylon by Cyrus: that they were published after the catastrophe of this extreme devastation which they announce, is wholly impossible to be maintained or believed, even on the most sceptical principles; because the collection and promulgation of the Jewish canon of Scripture made in the age after the return of the Jews from Babylon was prior to the time when we know Babylon not to have been so desolated. In fact, it was the work of some centuries to break down this gigantic city into a heap of ruins. It follows that the truth of the predictions of Isaiah and Jeremiah on this point is established, even upon the most extreme hypothesis. There is no date which can be assigned to them, even so licentiously, which will not leave them in possession of a clear prophetic character in this one branch of their subject. The proof is absolute, and beyond the reach of objection."[1]

With respect to *Tyre*, it will be sufficient to remark that the prophecies found in Amos and Isaiah were amplified during the period in which Ezekiel wrote, who predicted the fall of Tyre most particularly.

Egypt. The prophecies concerning the overthrow of Egypt are found in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. (Isa. xix., xx.; Jer. xliii.; xliv, 29, 30; xlvi.; and Ezek. xxix.–xxxi.) Egypt was the most ancient and one of the most powerful kingdoms, but its ruin was foretold by the Jewish prophets, and it was predicted that it would "become a base kingdom and never exalt itself any more among the nations." It was not, however, until three hundred and fifty years before Christ that Egypt became entirely subject to the Persians. Then it fell under the power of Macedonia, for 294 years remained in the hand of the Ptolemies, and about 30 B.C. became a province of Rome by the conquest of Augustus. Its history since that time has been a succession of degradations, and it is now what it was a

[1] Davison, pp. 488–9.

thousand years ago, a base kingdom, for three and a half centuries tributary to the Turks, and sharing the miseries of Turkish rule. "The doom of that kingdom has been baseness and degradation, not destruction. The body of it lies wasted, *diminished*, but not annihilated; many of its great cities have been dilapidated, still the carcase of its ancient being remains, like one of those objects of its own native art, a withered figure, a mummy, preserved in decay." Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Saracens, Mamelukes, Turks, have followed in turn as its masters, but the prediction has been fulfilled: "There shall no more be a prince of the land of Egypt." "They shall be desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities shall be in the midst of the cities that are wasted." The description, given in all the three prophets, of Divine judgments on the land, foretold an entire overthrow, and the agents through whom the overthrow should be accomplished, Nebuchadnezzar and Cambyses. Now it is important to notice that the prophecy concerning Egypt is discriminating, that it does not foretell, as in the cases of Assyria and Babylon, entire desolation, but baseness and a living death, prostrate degradation, and each of these destinies may be distinguished again from that predicted of the Jewish people, their dispersion among all the nations of the earth, and preservation in the midst of great sufferings and persecution. "Such predictions, although in some points of them the state of their evidence may be unequal, are too vast and too regular in the totality of their schemes, to be mistaken for the essays of human judgment, calculating upon the general instability of nations and empires; still less can they be referred to the fortuitous suggestions of a daring conjecture."[1]

3. *Prophecies concerning the kingdom of the Messiah and the dispensation of the gospel.*

It has already been observed that the light of prophecy was a gradually increasing light. This is especially true of the one central subject of revelation—the gracious *redemption*

[1] Davison.

to be wrought by a personal Saviour. The first promise was handed on, through the period of the patriarchs, to the larger and fuller revelation of the Mosaic economy. But that again was a period of typical, shadowy representations, though containing within it much more of Divine teaching than was given during the earlier dispensation. So we find, in the line of prophets, that while there is one to whom the title *evangelical* has been applied, because his prophecies deal so much with the kingdom of the Messiah and with gospel lessons, viz., the prophet Isaiah, yet it is not until after the time of the Divine judgments, and the return of the people from their captivity, that the predictions concerning the Redeemer partake of a minute and detailed character—that He is clearly named as Messiah the Prince, and the time of His advent foretold to the exact number of years. In this unity and progress of revelation is to be seen the evidence of a Divine purpose and foresight. At the same time, it cannot be expected that such evidence will impress every mind in the same manner. The more remote predictions will be rejected by the unbeliever as imaginary, and the more specific and particular will be doubted as making too great a demand upon faith, too evidently supernatural. We cannot, in this place, undertake to remove objections which might easily be brought against the applications made. To narrow the stream at any one spot is not to destroy the onward flow of it. The argument must stand or fall as a whole.

Jonah (B.C. 840–784) was one of the earliest, if not the earliest, of the prophets. He certainly taught, both by his own history and by the words of his prophecy, that there was a blessing for all the families of the earth. His remarkable deliverance was a parable, setting forth redemption from death, resurrection, and keeping the hopes of Israel alive.

Joel (B.C. 810–795), while predicting the judgments which would be poured out in the great day of the Lord, both upon the people of God and upon the heathen world, pointed to the light, as a light of salvation, ready to break forth when the Spirit

of God should be poured out upon all flesh, and whosoever should call on the name of the Lord should be saved; "*for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.*" That is, the promise is renewed, and the hopes of the world centred upon Jerusalem.

Hosea (B.C. 800–725), whose mission was mainly to the revolted tribes of Israel, while reproving them for their adulterous unfaithfulness to Jehovah, also renews the promise of special favour in the restoration of the throne of David. The idea of resurrection, which would seem to have been prominently before the minds of the people through the history of Jonah, was employed to give special emphasis to the prediction of a coming salvation (Hos. vi. 1, 2): "*Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days will He revive us: in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight.*" When the people shall repent and return, they will "*seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days*" (iii. 5). Thus the promised Redeemer was to be of the line of David and sit on David's throne.

Amos (B.C. 810–785), while for the most part the herald of judgment and the minister of reproof to a backsliding people, concludes his prophecies with a most assuring prediction of restoration, again connecting the promise with the house of David (ix. 11–15). "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old," etc., etc. There had been much said of the future redemption, in the days of David and Solomon; but the distinct promise of raising up the fallen dynasty of David and the extension of the restored empire over the heathen nations, it has been well said, "could be nothing less than a prediction of the Messiah's kingdom, synchronising with such Psalms as the 45th and 72nd, and unfolding the glorious picture of Judah

and Israel reunited under one great head." The reference was generally understood by the more ancient Jewish teachers to apply to the Messiah, and was so applied by James in his address, at the first council of the Church at Jerusalem (see Acts xv. 16, 17). Hengstenberg, in his "Christology," quotes the following passage from the "Sanhedrin," folio xcvi. 2, to show the opinion of modern Jews :—"Rabbi Nachman said to Rabbi Isaac, 'Hast thou heard when בַּר נַפְלֵי is to come?' The latter answered, 'Who is He?' R. Nachman said, 'The Messiah.' R. Isaac: 'But is the Messiah thus named?' R. Nachman: 'Certainly, in Amos ix. 11: 'In that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen" (הַנֹּפֶלֶת).

Micah (B.C. 758–699) prophesied both to Judah and Israel, and was contemporary with Isaiah, possibly preceding him in a portion of his prophecy. His predictions concerning the Messiah and His kingdom were very remarkable (see ch. ii. 12–13). The assembling of all Israel with their King passing before them, and the Lord as the head of them. The glory of the kingdom which should be established, to which all nations should flow, the kingdom of Zion and Jerusalem (ch. iv. throughout). The clear announcement of the coming Ruler and Deliverer, to be born at Bethlehem Ephratah, "*whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting*," who "*shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord*," who "*shall be great unto the ends of the earth*," restoring God's people, ruling over them by a union of tenderness and Divine power, and bringing the Church of God to final and eternal victory (ch. vi. and vii.) Such predictions prepared the way for a yet fuller bestowal of Divine truth.

Isaiah (B.C. 765–698), the evangelical prophet, took up the previous announcements and amplified them during a long ministry and with the loftiest prophetic powers. His very name signifies "*The Salvation of the Lord*," and his character corresponded with it, as the herald of glad tidings. Without attempting to describe fully the Messianic predictions of Isaiah, and setting aside all critical discussion of the passages

referred to, we give the following summary of what is taught in his prophecies, concerning the person and times of Christ, from the excellent work of Dr. Titcomb, "Revelation in Progress," pp. 317–322. He should appear as "the Branch of the Lord" to give prosperity to His Church at the time of its greatest extremity (iv. 2; *cf.* l.); should be miraculously born of a Virgin and named Immanuel (vii. 14; *cf.* Mic. v. 3; Jer. xxxi. 22); under this title should be a pledge of salvation to His country against the overwhelming power of the world (viii. 8–10), should be both human and Divine, born and eternal, a son of David and the Son of God (ix. 6); born in David's royal house as a "rod out of the stem of Jesse" in time of its deepest abasement (xi. 2, 3; *cf.* liii. 2); lawgiver, teacher, or counsellor (many passages); should have the Spirit of God with all His gifts and blessings, enabling Him to search the hearts and to carry on His government undeceived by outward appearances (xi. 2–3; xlii. 1–4; xxxii. 3–8; lxi. 1). The way of His appearing should be duly prepared, and all obstacles to it thrown down (xl. 3, 4). When He appeared He should be received with incredulity and abhorrence by a considerable portion of the people (xlix. 4, 5, 7; liii. 1–3), would experience most shameful and abusive treatment from them (l. 5, 6; lii. 14; liii. 3–7). His appearance, in the midst of them, would be humble and without any outward splendour (liii. 2). It would terminate in a violent death (liii. 8, 9), not for His own sins but for His people's, without which they could not be restored to God (liii. 4–6). His days should nevertheless be prolonged after death, and the offering up of His soul introduce reconciliation with God, among a very numerous family of faithful people (liii. 10–12). Under a consciousness of His final victory, He would bear all His sorrows with patient fortitude (l. 7–9; liii. 7). This victory after His humiliation should issue in His exaltation over all the kings of the earth (xlix. 7; lii. 13–15; liii. 12). He should appear in personal beauty to the righteous, and extend His kingdom to the remotest distance (xxxiii. 17 with previous context). In weakness He should establish the kingdom

of God, as the "Servant of the Lord," till the end was accomplished (many passages, especially xlii. 1, 3, 4). In addition to these personal predictions concerning the Redeemer, the book is full of prophecies concerning the glory of the Church and the times of the gospel dispensation, especially in the later prophecies (xl. to lxvi.). Is it possible to glance through this wonderful book and not feel the influence of its inspired foresight? Could a merely human wisdom or genius have ventured thus to portray the future; and is not the evangelical spirit, which breathes through the whole, a Divine anticipation of the times which came eight centuries afterwards, separated from the time of Isaiah by so many dark events and terrible judgments? The mind which can place Isaiah's prophecies beside the New Testament and deny the inspiration of the prophet, must be under some strangely oppressive and perverting spell of opinion, which hides the clear conclusions of a better judgment. The correspondence speaks for itself.

Nahum (B.C. 720–698) lived at a time when the people of God were filled with terror in the presence of a great empire, that of Assyria, which, although it had been severely visited with Divine judgments, being attacked by the Medes, and its capital, Nineveh, sacked, and its king, Sardanapalus, destroyed, had revived, and carried away captive the ten tribes of Israel. Judah trembled. Nahum was sent to prophesy the final destruction of Nineveh, and so clear the way for the fulfilment of the Divine promises concerning Judah (ch. i. 12–18). "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him." "Behold upon the mountains the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off" (i. 7, 15). This was written a hundred years before the captivity of Judah, and must therefore have pointed out that deliverance and rest which should be established in the days of the Messiah.

Habakkuk (B.C. 612–598) is a book of prophetic prayers

and Divine answers to them. "The main scope of the prophecy was to prepare the minds of the elect for their coming sufferings, to supply them with a stimulus for sustained faith during the troublous times of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah; to assure them of God's power to revive his Church out of captivity (ch. iii. 2); and, looking through Isaiah's grand prediction, respecting the overruling of all their troubles for the introduction of Messianic glory." [1]

Zephaniah (B.C. 640–609) continued the same strain which Isaiah had sounded so loudly, speaking especially of the conversion of the Gentiles, and the restoration of the dispersed people of God (iii. 9–20).

Jeremiah (B.C. 628–585) predicted the restoration from Babylon, and the renewal of Divine favour to Judah, connecting this promise of grace with anticipations of the personal Redeemer which were of the clearest and most decided character. See especially ch. xxxiii. 15–18: "*In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness* (Isa. iv. 2; xi. 1, and *cf.* xxiii. 5) *to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness,*" *etc.* The promise is also given of a "*new covenant*" (see ch. xxxi. 31–34; *cf.* xxxiii. 19–26, and Heb. viii. 8–12; x. 16, 17). The whole tone of Jeremiah's prophecies was one of anticipation of gospel freedom and spirituality; and thus the previous predictions were enlarged immediately before the outpouring of Divine judgments in the destruction of Jerusalem, and as a preparation for the seventy years of captivity.

The seventh period of prophecy, then, extending from the time of the revolt of the ten tribes, and the apparent breaking up of the Jewish kingdom, to the time of the Captivity, a still more terrible visitation, a period of some three hundred and fifty years, was filled, from beginning to end, with predictions of the future, respecting the destinies of the two kingdoms, the sur-

[1] Titcomb.

rounding nations more immediately connected with the people of God, and the kingdom of Messiah and its glory. Such a stream of prophetic light could have issued from no other than a Divine Fountain.

VIII. Period: from the Captivity in Babylon to the Birth of Jesus Christ.

From 606 B.C. to the Christian era. A period which, while it includes six centuries of time, embraces only a small number of sacred writers; the Hebrew canon closing about 400 years before Christ. The books included are those of *Daniel*, *Ezekiel*, *Obadiah*, *Haggai*, *Zechariah*, *Malachi*, and these we will now briefly examine as to their fulfilment.

Daniel (B.C. 606–534). The authenticity and integrity of the book of Daniel has been ably defended, against the attacks of rationalist critics, by Dr. Pusey. We must leave the defence in his hands, and without entering on any questions of authorship or date, take for granted, in this place, that it is what its position in the Hebrew canon assumes it to be, the work of a prophet who lived during the Captivity and whose history is partly described in its pages. If the predictions contained in Daniel were really made, and fulfilled as the history narrates, and as the course of time has proved them, there can be no doubt about the reality of Divine revelation. "The book of Daniel has nothing of the nature of secular history; it records only certain events whereby God acted upon heathen monarchs in whose keeping His people, the depositaries of His revelation to man, for the time were, and these events were mostly supernatural. The prophecies also are one connected whole, they admit of no dislocation; they speak definitely of a long period far beyond Daniel's time." "The visions show the succession of world-empires, beginning with the description of the Babylonian world-empire and its displacement by the Medo-Persian. Thenceforward there is no break. They are outlines, shaded here and there, and at times more strongly, which embrace the whole space from Nebuchadnezzar to (as every one admits) Antiochus Epiphanes." "One prophecy only

which fills up outlines of the earlier prophecy, stops with the Old Testament Antichrist, Antiochus Epiphanes; the others exhibit in the distant vista, the final establishment of the gospel, the second coming of Christ, the Resurrection."[1] The predictions on which we would lay the greatest stress, as those which can be least challenged, (for whether they were delivered during the Captivity or two hundred years afterwards can really make no difference to the argument,) are those in the seventh and ninth chapters, concerning the kingdom of the Messiah. The visions of the successive kingdoms, in the second chapter, including the prophecy of "the stone cut out of the mountains without hands" (ii. 34, 35, and 44), foretold of a kingdom different from all other kingdoms, which should be universal and supreme. But in the seventh chapter, at the ninth verse, commences a prophetic description of the kingdom of Messiah under the title of the Son of man, which, if it were published even a single generation before the coming of Christ, would be a proof of Divine prescience. In the ninth chapter, from the 24th to the 27th verse, we find the most remarkable prediction of the Old Testament. In it it is announced, that there should be a space of seventy weeks of years, from the command of God to rebuild the city of Jerusalem to "*Messiah the Prince.*" That He would be "*cut off, but not for Himself,*" at the end of the sixty-ninth, or in the midst of the seventieth, week of years. That then the promised consolation of Israel should come, pardon and righteousness; and while the blessings of the covenant should be bestowed on many, the city and Temple should once more become a prey to a foreign host, which should set up in them "the abomination of desolation," and leave them in final ruin (Dan. ix. 24, 25, 26, 27; *cf.* Matt. xxiv. 15). Who could have ventured on such a prediction at any time during the pre-christian period, unless divinely inspired? It was a wonderful advancement in prophecy that the exact time should be given, when the Deliverer should appear, and the redemption be complete, and that His titles should be so clearly spoken,

[1] Pusey: Preface.

"*the Son of man*," "*Messiah the Prince.*" The crucifixion of Christ took place exactly as it had been foretold, 490 years after the year B.C. 457–8, when Artaxerxes issued the decree to rebuild the city and restore the fallen nation. In sixty-two weeks, 434 years, Christ appeared, and in the half week, three and a half years, He was cut off. Prideaux reckons that the first seven weeks ended with Nehemiah's last act of reformation, by which the restoration was concluded, B.C. 409, that is 49 years. See this prophecy very fully discussed, with the various futile attempts of rationalists to evade it, in "Pusey on Daniel," Lecture IV.; also *Moses Stuart's* Commentary; *Lee's* "Events and Times of the Visions of Daniel;" *Bishop Newton* "On the Prophecies;" *Auberlen's* "Daniel and the Revelation," and *Keith's* "Evidence of Prophecy."

Ezekiel (B.C. 595–536) contains many predictions of judgments on Jerusalem for idolatry, and on Pagan nations because of their hatred to God's people. Egypt, as we have seen, was the subject of many very remarkable predictions. But the chief evidence to be found in Ezekiel is the clear announcement of the restoration of Israel, scattered throughout the book, and more especially given in ch. xxxvii.–xlviii. In ch. xvii. 22–24, and xxi. 25–27, and xxxiv. 23–31, we have predictions of the great deliverer, "the Branch," "the Shepherd," "the true David," "the Prince." He should be raised up from a very lowly origin to the greatest elevation; evil kingdoms should be overturned, that He might come whose right it is to reign. Zion should be the centre of the kingdom, and should gather to itself all the kingdoms of the world. The memorable vision of the valley filled with dry bones, and the resurrection of the great army of living men, must have been a most impressive message to an afflicted people. "Hosea and Isaiah had both spoken of the Messianic regeneration of Israel as a resurrection from the dead; but here the idea was elaborated, and the prophetic picture painted on a larger sheet of canvas. This change was to proceed from God. It could not come from any reviving power of their own,

but only by the Divine grace and power. Nor was it to extend merely over a part of the nation ; every dead bone was to live ; the whole mass was to be penetrated with fresh health and vigour. Hence not the most distantly scattered tribe need despair. Ephraim and Judah, the ten tribes and the two, were alike to be resuscitated and to flourish. Messiah was to make them one." [1]

Haggai (B.C. 520–518) was one of the returned exiles, and his prophecy is in the form of discourses spoken for the encouragement of the people in rebuilding the Temple at Jerusalem. God's glory should be seen in the Temple, and hereafter He would send to it the great Redeemer, shaking the kingdoms of the earth (ii. 6, 7, 9). The glory of the latter Temple should exceed that of Solomon, because of the fulfilment in it of the ancient promises. The overthrow of heathen kingdoms should prepare the way for the glory of Messiah (ii. 20–23).

Zechariah (B.C. 520–510). There is some doubt as to the unity and integrity of the prophecies under the name of Zechariah, but there can be no doubt at all that, whether all the work of one man or not, they all precede in date the fourth century before Christ. The predictions concern the future both of God's people and of heathen nations. Babylon would be destroyed; Persia (the land of Hadrach) would be overthrown with Damascus and Tyre. The Jews would contend against the Grecians with great power (ix. 13–17, and x. 6) ; and at last there should be a great gathering of Israel and destruction of heathen power before it. Under the type of Zerubbabel, Messiah was predicted, as a king and high priest, and procuring peace for His people (vi. 12–15), and repentance (xii. 10–14). He was to grow up as a branch (vi. 12) ; enter Jerusalem as a king, meek and lowly, and without worldly pomp ; as a shepherd should be torn away from His flock by a violent death, to their dismay and confusion, but should at last appear in His majesty on the mount of Olives accompanied by His saints, an earthquake announcing and attending His advent, and the mountain

[1] Titcomb.

so dividing that the people should find a way of escape through the lengthened valley of Jehoshaphat (ch. xiii. 7 and xiv. 4, 5). We have already remarked that the later prophets, while they added nothing to the substance of the ancient promises, which for ages had foretold the advent of a great Deliverer, drew out the prophecy into detail; and here in Zechariah we see an example of that minute description of Messiah, which would wonderfully prepare the people for the main characteristics of Jesus Christ (ch. ix. 9). His lowliness, His suffering, His shepherd character, His entrance into Jerusalem as a king, His resurrection and ascension, and final glory on the mount of Olives in the midst of His disciples. Even the thirty pieces of silver thrown to the potter (see ch. xi. 10–14), although described in connection with the prophet's own ministry, must impress every candid reader, as containing a striking coincidence with the history of the Messiah, which the evangelist has pointed out. The whole of the book is full of encouragement for the people of God, in view of the fulfilment of His covenant. The whole world should surround Zion, and men of all languages should say to the Jew, in the presence of such indisputable evidence of the truth of God's promises, "We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you" (viii. 23). It was almost the last voice of ancient prophecy, and it was full of hope and assurance of the future, as of a future clearly, divinely foreseen.

Malachi (B.C. 436–397), the last of the prophets, if indeed he was a prophet, spoke chiefly the word of warning and exhortation to the people of God, to prepare them for the kingdom of Messiah which should come suddenly: "Who may abide the day of His coming?" What He would be, what He would do, and the nature of that great crisis which He would inaugurate, are described; and the immediate precursor of the great day of the Lord is announced, the Elijah-messenger, who should preach repentance, revive the piety of the covenant people, and bring them into unity of feeling with their forefathers and with one another (ch. iv. 1–6). There seems some probability in the view that the messenger of the cove-

nant, referred to in iii. 1, and in the term "Sun of righteousness" in iv. 2, was an allusion to the angel of the Lord, the angel of the covenant, who appeared so often during the history of God's people, and whose glory was seen as a bright light amongst them. Certainly, this last of the prophecies was a very fitting preparation for that dispensation which was heralded with the preaching of John the Baptist, and which, a spiritual dispensation, tried all men as with fire, the baptism of which was the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire. To suppose such a message the mere casual work of a Jew, in the time of spiritual degradation which preceded the Christian era for centuries, is to maintain an irrational theory. The Spirit of God speaks in every word.

IX. Period: The prophecy of the New Testament.

It is not the purpose of these remarks on prophecy to give an exhaustive enumeration of the fulfilled predictions of Scripture, but simply by a few examples, to show that there is sufficient evidence of a supernatural foresight, bestowed upon the sacred writers, to justify the Christian in appealing to the authority of the sacred writings, as above those of uninspired men. Some writers on prophecy, in dealing with the books of the New Testament, have included among the instances of fulfilled predictions the apocalyptic visions of the great apostasy, with the intimations on the same subject to be found in the writings of the apostle Paul. But as this is a department of the argument which would admit of much controversy, both as to the interpretation of symbolical language, and as to the canonical authority of the Apocalypse, it will be best to dispense with it, as a ground too doubtful to be occupied in the present review of the Christian position. We shall therefore confine our attention to the predictions which are found in the Synoptic Gospels, and attributed there to Jesus Christ. They are included in several parables and discourses, delivered at different times, but are entirely omitted from the fourth Gospel, a circumstance easily accounted for, as the apostle John survived the rest of the companions of Jesus Christ, and wrote

his Gospel some twenty years after the destruction of Jerusalem, to which the predictions chiefly refer. The following passages are the main instances which may be referred to: Matt. xxi. 18–33; xxii. 1–7; xxiv.; xxv. 14–30. Mark xi. 12–20; xiii. Luke xiii. 6–9; xiv. 17–24; xx. 9–19; xxi.; xxiii. 27–31.

It may be stated, at the outset, that while the attacks upon the authenticity of the Synoptic Gospels have been maintained with great obstinacy for centuries, and have been especially violent in the case of the modern critical school of Germany, they may be said to have brought about an almost entire coincidence of opinion, that the first three Gospels are all authentic records, and that their date is about 60 to 68 A.D. Apart from all circumstantial verification, it may be asked, is it within the bounds of reasonable probability, that the early foes of Christianity, Celsus, Porphyry, Julian, and others, would not have claimed a decided victory could it have been proved that the predictions uttered by our Lord were not recorded until after the destruction of Jerusalem? Moreover, was it likely that the Gospels should have been composed, in their present form, within ten years after that event, when the Christians were driven away to Pella, and the confusion of the time would be little in accordance with the demands of such a work as inditing a gospel history? The nature of the predictions should also be borne in mind. They are clear enough to be true predictions, and yet not detailed enough to bear the appearance of being written after the event. Had a supposed forger sat down, after the year 70 A.D., to invent such words, in order to place them in the mouth of Jesus Christ, is it at all conceivable, judging from other instances of spurious predictions, of the early Christian times, that he would have written exactly such predictions as we find in the Gospels? As to the fulfilment of the prophecy, we have the evidence of historians like Josephus, Tacitus, Philostratus, Dion Cassius, who cannot be suspected of accommodating their historical records to suit the views of Christians. The disciples asked of their Master to give them some signs when they might

expect the foretold destruction of their city and Temple, and the end of the world; that is, the winding up of the ancient Jewish economy. One of the signs thus predicted in answer to the request of the disciples was *the appearance of false Messiahs*, of men claiming to be the Restorers and Deliverers of Israel. That such false Christs did appear we know, although it might have been supposed that the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus would deter any from setting up the claim. *Simon Magus*, *Dositheus the Samaritan*, *Theudas*, referred to by Gamaliel, and *Judas of Galilee* (see Acts v. 36, 37; and Josephus, "Antiq." XX. v. 1, 7, 5). "The country was filled with impostors and deceivers, who induced the people to follow them into the wilderness; their credulity became the punishment of their previous scepticism, and in one instance the tumult was so great that the soldiers took two hundred prisoners, and slew twice that number."[1] Again, our Saviour predicted a time of great distress and confusion and public calamity, "wars and rumours of wars," conflicting nations, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes. Josephus tells us that there were such troubles, as at Cæsarea, where twenty thousand Jews were put to death, and the remaining Jewish inhabitants expelled from the city by the Syrians. The whole of Syria was filled with confusion and bloodshed. In Alexandria fifty thousand Jews are said to have perished, and ten thousand in Damascus. The Jews were in a state of continual revolt against the Roman power, and in continual dread of punishment. Italy and the Roman empire generally was in great confusion. In two years four emperors perished—Nero, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, and the whole world seemed out of joint; and yet at the time that our Lord uttered His prediction, about the year 33, Tiberius was emperor, and there seemed no prospect of such violent disorders, for as yet Nero had not appeared. As to the natural occurrences predicted, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes, although it might perhaps be alleged that such were continually happening in the Eastern world, still there

[1] Keith.

must have been unusual terror excited by those of the time preceding the destruction of Jerusalem, for Josephus remarks "The constitution of Nature was confounded for the destruction of men, and one might easily conjecture that no common calamities were portended" (iv. 4). Suetonius and Tacitus join with the Jewish historian in speaking of the time as one of fearful calamities. There were earthquakes at Rome, Apamea, Crete, in Campania, and the memorable convulsion in Asia Minor, which destroyed the cities of Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colosse, and which would be remarkably impressive to Christian observers, with whom the prediction was preserved. *Fearful signs and omens* were predicted, and they are described by Tacitus, "Hist." v. 13 (confirmed by Josephus): "Evenerant prodigiæ, quæ neque hostiis, neque votis piare fas habet gens superstitioni obnoxia, religionibus adversa. Visæ per cœlum concurrere acies, rutilantia arma et subito nubium igne collucere templum. Ex apertæ repente delubri fores et audita major humana vox *excedere deos;* simul ingens motus excedentium."

Persecution, imprisonment, hatred of all nations, martyrdom, were predicted for the disciples themselves. Many should be offended, should betray one another, and their love wax cold. That such was the case, the early history of the Church abundantly testifies. Many were put to death before the year 70. "There was war against their very name. They were accused of hatred to the human race. The prejudices and the interest of the supporters of paganism were everywhere against them; and in one memorable instance, Nero, to screen himself from the guilt of being the incendiary of his capital, accused the innocent but hated Christians of that atrocious deed, and inflicted upon them most excruciating tortures (see Tacitus' 'Annals,' xv. 44). He made their sufferings a spectacle and a sport to the Romans. To compensate for his disappointment in not trampling on the ashes of Rome, as well as to cloke his iniquity, the monster (for the man and the monarch were both laid aside) gratified his savage lust of cruelty by the substitution of one feast for another; he selected the Chris-

tians for his victims, from the general odium under which they lay, and their very name became the warrant for that selection, and sufficed to sanction the infliction of unheard-of barbarities."[1] Such a time must have witnessed many an instance of apostasy, and the apostle Paul mentions such as occurring in his day (2 Tim. iv. 10, 14–16).

But one of the most wonderful predictions which the Lord included in His discourse, was that of *the proclamation of the gospel throughout the world* before the year 70, that is, in little more than a single generation from His time, and in the face of all the opposition and hatred which He also prophesied. And yet the New Testament itself bears witness, both in the instance of Paul and in the writings of Peter and John, to the wide extension of Christian faith. The prediction was also given that Jerusalem should be encompassed with the warlike hosts of its enemies, should be destroyed, the stones of its Temple thrown down, and fearful distress inflicted upon its inhabitants. All this is matter of history, and may be read in any narrative of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.[2] Keith has pointed out that when the Roman army first surrounded the city it might have been supposed that the end was come; but our Lord had bidden His disciples wait until they actually saw the ensign of the enemy, and then flee. Cestius Gallus, the Roman general, besieged Jerusalem; but immediately after, contrary to all human probability, an interval was given for escape. He suddenly and causelessly retreated, though some of the chief men of the city had offered to open to him the gates. Josephus[3] acknowledges that the utmost consternation prevailed among the besieged, and that the city would infallibly have been taken; and he attributes it to the just vengeance of God that the city and the sanctuary were not then taken and the war terminated at once. He

[1] Keith.

[2] See Josephus "De Bell.," ii. 19, 20, and the Christian writers Epiphanius and Eusebius; also Milman: "History of the Jews," vol. ii.

[3] ii. 19, 20.

relates, also, how many of the most illustrious inhabitants departed from the city, as from a sinking vessel, and how, upon the approach of Vespasian afterwards, multitudes fled from Jericho into the mountainous country (see Matt. xxiv. 15–20). Thither, and to the city of Pella, fled all the disciples of Jesus. And amidst all the succeeding calamities not a hair of their head did perish (as was foretold, see Matt. xxiv. 13, etc.). The account given by Josephus of the horrors of the siege is familiar to most; but the following summary, by Keith, will recall the principal coincidences between the events and the language of our Saviour's predictions. "No general description can give a just idea of calamities the most terrible that ever nation suffered. The Jews had assembled in their city from all the surrounding country to keep the feast of unleavened bread. It was crowded with inhabitants, when they were all imprisoned within its walls. The passover, which was commemorative of their first great deliverance, had collected them for their last signal destruction. Before any external enemy appeared, the fiercest dissensions prevailed, the blood of thousands was shed by their brethren; they destroyed and burned in their frenzy their common provisions for the siege; they were destitute of any regular government, and divided into three factions. On the extirpation of one of these, each of the others contended for the mastery. The most ferocious and frantic, the robbers or zealots, as they are indiscriminately called, prevailed at last. They entered the Temple, under pretence of offering sacrifices, and carried concealed weapons for the purpose of assassination. They slew the priests at the very altar, and their blood, instead of that of the victims for sacrifice, flowed around it. They afterwards rejected all terms of peace with the enemy. None were suffered to escape from the city, every house was entered, every article of subsistence was pillaged, and the most wanton barbarities were committed. Nothing could restrain their fury. Wherever there was the appearance or scent of food, the human

bloodhounds tracked it out; and, though a general famine raged around, though they were ever trampling on the dead, and though the habitations for the living were converted into charnel-houses, nothing could intimidate, or appal, or satisfy, or shock them, till Mary, the daughter of Eleazar, a lady once rich and noble, displayed to them and offered them all her remaining food, the scent of which had attracted them in their search—the bitterest morsel that ever mother or mortal tasted—the remnant of her half-eaten suckling. Sixty thousand Roman soldiers unremittingly besieged them; they encompassed Jerusalem with a wall, and hemmed them in on every side; they brought down their high and fenced walls to the ground; they slaughtered the slaughterers, they spared not the people; they burned the Temple in defiance of the commands, the threats, and the resistance of their general. With it the last hope of the Jews was extinguished. They raised at the sight, an universal, but an expiring cry of sorrow and despair. Ten thousand were there slain, and six thousand victims were enveloped in its blaze. The whole city, full of the famished dying, and of the murdered dead, presented no picture but that of despair, no scene but of horror. The aqueducts and the city sewers were crowded as the last refuge of the hopeless. Two thousand were found dead there, and many were dragged from thence and slain. The Roman soldiers put all indiscriminately to death, and ceased not till they became faint and weary and overpowered with the work of destruction. But they only sheathed the sword to light the torch. They set fire to the city in various places. The flames spread everywhere, and were checked but for a moment by the red streamlets in every street. Jerusalem became heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest. Within the circuit of eight miles, in the space of five months—foes and famine, pillage and pestilence, within, a triple wall around, and besieged every moment from without—eleven hundred thousand human beings perished—though the tale of each of them was a tragedy. Was there ever

so concentrated a mass of misery? Could any prophecy be more faithfully and awfully fulfilled? The prospect of His own crucifixion, when Jesus was on the way to Calvary, was not more clearly before Him, and seemed to affect Him less, than the fate of Jerusalem. How full of tenderness, and fraught with truth, was the sympathetic response of the condoling sufferer, to the wailings and lamentations of the women who followed Him, when He turned unto them, and beheld the city, which some of them might yet see wrapt in flames and drenched in blood, and said: 'Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they will say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?' No impostor ever betrayed such feelings as a man, nor predicted events so unlikely, astonishing and true, as an attestation of a Divine commission. Jesus revealed the very judgments of God; for such the instrument, by whom it was accomplished, interpreted the capture and destruction of Jerusalem, acknowledging that his own power would otherwise have been ineffectual. When eulogised for the victory, Titus disclaimed the praise, affirming that he was only the instrument of executing the sentence of Divine justice. And their own historian asserts, in conformity with every declaration of Scripture upon the subject, that the iniquities of the Jews were as unparalleled as their punishment."[1]

In concluding this rapid review of the evidence from prophecy, it is important to remember, that the strength of the argument does not rest upon any particular fulfilment, but upon the broad fact that prophecy was uttered, and that, to some extent, and so far as we can trace the correspondence between the words of the prophets and the subsequent events, it was fulfilled. Butler's remarks, on the common-sense mode of judg-

[1] Keith.

ment in analogous cases of imperfect correspondence, are just and pertinent. "The obscurity or unintelligibleness of one part of a prophecy does not, in any degree, invalidate the proof of foresight, arising from the appearing completion of those other parts which are understood." "Though a man be incapable, for want of learning, or opportunities of inquiry, or from not having turned his studies this way, even so much as to judge, whether particular prophecies have been throughout completely fulfilled; yet he may see, in general, that they have been fulfilled to such a degree as upon very good ground to be convinced of foresight more than human in such prophecies, and of such events being intended by them. For the same reason also, though, by means of the deficiencies in civil history, and the different accounts of historians, the most learned should not be able to make out to satisfaction, that such parts of the prophetic history have been minutely and throughout fulfilled, yet a very strong proof of foresight may arise from that general completion of them which is made out; as much proof of foresight, perhaps, as the Giver of prophecy intended should ever be afforded by such parts of prophecy."[1] These remarks are borne out with special force in the case of our Saviour's advent and the general scheme of Christianity, regarded as fulfilments of prophecy. However the apologist may fail in proving that certain particular words in the prophets found their fulfilment in certain historical events which occurred centuries afterwards, it cannot be denied by any thoughtful and candid student of the Old Testament, that the general meaning of prophecy, as it went on increasing in volume, from the first promise of redemption to the full descriptions of a coming servant of the Lord in Isaiah, and the many promises of a great day of deliverance and blessing from Jehovah abounding in the later prophets, can be identified, in the records of the New Testament, as Divine fulfilment of the expectations of ages. However critics may differ upon the authenticity and date of the sacred writ-

[1] "Anal.," Pt. II. ch. vii.

ings, they cannot dispute the fact that all the Old Testament was written before the Christian era, certainly before the time of the Septuagint version, that is three centuries B.C. This is quite sufficient to prove that the writers of the prophecies, whoever they were and whenever they wrote, could not by mere human foresight have anticipated the facts of Christianity. But the general correspondence of the New Testament with the Old, as a substance to the shadow cast before, is patent to the most superficial observer; and, as Butler has observed,[1] "unless the whole series of things which may be alleged in this argument, and every particular thing in it, can reasonably be supposed to have been by accident (for here the stress of the argument for Christianity lies), then is the truth of it proved." It will be evident that the argument from prophecy is one which may be carried out to almost any extent. The present chapter is intended only to direct the reader's study to the most important points; and to show that there is abundant evidence of superhuman foresight.

[1] "Anal.," Pt. II. ch. vii.

CHAPTER VIII.

CANONICAL AUTHORITY OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

HITHERTO we have assumed the authenticity and genuineness of the sacred books. Our argument has not been critical, but moral. The assumption, however, it has been remarked, was not one which, even though proved too large, really invalidated the argument; because the doubts of critics do not extend so far as to reject altogether the *antiquity* of the books, or to *expunge* from them those portions on which the argument relies. In the case of prophecy, it cannot be of vital moment to prove that, *e.g.*, the Pentateuch was written by Moses, or that it was all anterior to the time of Ezra. To suppose that it is spurious, would still leave the certainty untouched that *some such books* were current among the ancient Jews; and the later prophets, about whose existence and writings there is less doubt, by their spirit and allusions, bear witness to the truthfulness of the more ancient books. If portions of the prophecies have been misplaced, or attributed to wrong authors, or accommodated to events by transcribers, or in any other way tampered with, there remains the *unbroken line* of Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, testifying to the work of the Divine Spirit through fifteen hundred years. Against such a fact the small shiftings and readjustments which criticism demands seem utterly insignificant. There is still "*the word of God which endureth for ever.*"

But this argument for the truth of revelation would not be complete without a review—which must of necessity be concise and summary—of the chief grounds upon which *the canonical*

authority of the books of the Old and New Testaments is made to rest. The modern works on this subject are so many and so able that it is open to the student to follow the argument into the fullest detail. The articles in Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," "*Canon*," and on the separate books of Scripture; the learned works of Dr. Westcott and Dr. Sanday; Angus's "Handbook of the Bible;" Keil's "Introduction to the Old Testament;" Stuart's "Critical History and Defence of the Old Testament" (1849); and the various introductions to the Old and New Testaments—Horne, Bleek, Davidson, Hävernick, Jahn, Hengstenberg; Kirchhofer's "Leitfaden zur Bibelkunde," 2nd edition (Stuttgart, 1860); Charteris' "Canonicity" (1880); Wetzel's "Bible and its History," with Preface by Krummacher (1858, Elberfeld); L. Gaussen: "The Authority of Scripture" (Basle, 64); with the commentaries of Lange and Ellicott, will furnish abundant information on the researches of scholars and the most reliable conclusions to be drawn from them. The following pages are not intended to be a satisfactory argument in reply to all critical objections to particular books of Scripture, which must be met by a more exact and minute examination of their worth, such as we find in Dr. Pusey's work on Daniel; but the hope is entertained that, by a candid view of the argument for the canonicity of Scripture, as a whole, the conviction may be firmly laid down in the mind that, whatever may be said about particular portions of the Book, substantially it is what it is claimed to be, a transcript of the work of the Spirit of God, in the Jewish Church, and in the first few years of the Christian era. The following division of the subject will be convenient:—

I. The main points of the argument for the authority of the *Old Testament canon.*

II. The main points in the argument for the *New Testament canon.*

III. The attempt of the critical school of Germany to overturn the authority of the New Testament.

IV. The attack of the author of "Supernatural Religion" upon the supernatural elements in the New Testament.

I. *The main points of the argument for the authority of the Old Testament canon.*

Before stating these points it will be necessary to explain the word "*canon*," in respect to the Old and New Testaments. This, and the term "*Bible*," have now become familiar in a secondary sense, somewhat different from the primary. The word "Bible" is derived from the Greek *βίβλος*, or *βιβλία*, the diminutive *βιβλίον* being employed, in New Testament Greek, in a general sense, for books. The original meaning of the word is, the bark of a tree, or the lining of the papyrus, and hence "paper," like the word "*liber*" in Latin, and so applied to paper in the form of a book. But the earliest use of the word for the Scriptures was not in the form of *ἡ βίβλος*, but in the plural of the diminutive, *τὰ βιβλία*, and represented a library of small books. We can trace this name of the Scriptures as early as the fifth century. Jerome, in the fourth century, used the expression, "*the Divine library*" (*bibliotheca divina*). This expression became common among the Latin writers. From them it passed into the Anglo-Saxon. Shortly afterwards the Greek writers employed the word *βιβλία* in a similar application. Together with Jerome's nomenclature, this was current till the thirteenth century, when, as Dr. Westcott puts it, by a happy solecism, the neuter plural *τὰ βιβλία* came to be regarded as a feminine singular, *ἡ βιβλία*, "*the Bible.*" There are other names which are found in the New Testament, and early Fathers, for the books of the canon. They are called "*the writings*," or *the Scripture*; or the *sacred, Divine, holy Scriptures* (*αἱ γραφαὶ, ἡ γραφὴ, τὰ ἱερὰ γράμματα*, the words *θεῖα, ἅγια*, and such like, being used to denote their special authority). In like manner, the terms Old, and New, *Testament*, have arisen, from an extension of the meaning of the Greek word *διαθήκη*, originally employed of the law of Moses as a covenant of God with His people ("the book of the covenant:" see 2 Kings xxiii. 2; and *cf.* 2 Cor. iii. 14; Heb. vii. 22, viii. 6, ix. 15). It was thus a term applied to the Pentateuch as the book of the law, and from that limited

use came to be extended to all the sacred writings, as the law, or covenant, or testament of God. *Instrumentum*, record, was similarly employed by scholars in the early Church; but as being less popular in meaning, it gradually disappeared. The word "canon," with its congeners, has a similar history. It is derived from the Greek κανὼν, which in its primary sense signified a straight rod, then a measuring rod, and hence, generally, a pattern, rule, or ideal norm. The first application of the word *canon*, in the Christian Church, was to the doctrines, rather than to the letter, of Scripture. The rule of faith and life was called the canon of the Church (ὁ τῆς ἐκκλησίας κανὼν), the canon of the gospel (κανὼν τοῦ σωτηριοῦ κηρύγματος); that is, what the leading churches held to be the fundamental, doctrinal and practical, conception of Christianity. Anterior to the Christian era, the word κανὼν was not employed in a religious application. The *regula fidei*, or rule of faith, or rule of the Church (*regula ecclesiastica*), the canon of faith, or canon of truth (κανὼν τῆς ἀληθείας or πίστεως), led, in the fourth century, to a very natural designation of the sacred books, as being the source of the canon of faith, "*the Scripture of the canon*," or canonical Scriptures (γραφὴ κανόνος, or γραφαὶ κανονικαι, or κανονιζόμεναι. It is well to remember that the word "*canon*" is entirely Christian, and was never used by the Jews, of the Old Testament. It is found first in the writings of the Christian Fathers; and in the sense of *authorized*, as opposed to *apocryphal*, it was probably first employed by Origen,[1] though it does not appear in Greek, but only in Latin translations. In the 59th canon of the council of Laodicea, the word κανονικός occurs in contrast with ἰδιωτικὸς and ἀκανονίστος. Athanasius speaks of canonized books (βιβλία κανονιζόμενα). The argument for the canon of the Old Testament may be arranged as follows :—

1. The evidence of authority to be derived from the statements of the Old and New Testaments.

2. The history of the canon so far as it can be traced.

[1] See his Comment in Matt. iii. p. 916, Ed. Delarue, where the expression "*libri regulares*" is found in a similar sense.

3. The testimony of Jewish schools and individual Jewish writers.

4. The testimony of the early Christian Fathers.

We commence, therefore, with the first of these divisions.

1. *The evidence of authority to be gathered from the statements of the Scriptures themselves.* This, of course, must be regarded as insufficient, apart from other evidence of an external and internal character, but it may fairly be taken as claiming consideration. The books come to us with a certain assumed authority; it is patent on the face of them, in their language, it must therefore be accepted until disproved. It is quite certain, that, from the earliest times, there were writings which were distinguished among the Jews, not as mere national literature, as Semler, Eichhorn, De Wette, Hitzig, and others have maintained, but as the writings of inspired men, "holy men of God," with regulative authority over the faith and life of God's people. The very fact that, in the arrangement of the books of the Old Testament, a distinction was made, in the degree of reverence to be attached to the writings, shows that the idea of Divine authority was attached to them, though the degree of that authority varied; the *Law*, or Pentateuch, coming first, then *the Prophets*, and then the *Hagiographa*, or collection of sacred writings. In the preservation of the sacred books the Jews were careful to observe Divine injunctions. "Moses wrote the law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi," and commanded them, saying, "Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee" (Deut. xxxi. 9, 26). Joshua followed the example set by Moses, and wrote the covenant which he made, "*in the book of the law of God*" (Josh. xxiv. 26), a proof that the book was still preserved in his time. Passing on to the time of Samuel, and the settled state of the people in Canaan, we read (1 Sam. x. 25): "Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord." It seems probable that the historical and prophetical

books were kept in the same place—the ark of the covenant. Solomon deposited the earliest books and his own productions in his newly-erected Temple (2 Kings xxii. 8, Isa. xxxiv. 16), and it was, doubtless, the early copy of the law of Moses, which had been left in the original place and neglected, contrary to the commandment that it should be publicly read every year, which was discovered by Hilkiah, the high priest, in the reign of Josiah, about 641 B.C. (see 2 Kings xxii. 8, 10, 11; and *cf.* 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14).

In Isaiah xxxiv. 16 the people are invited to "*seek out of the book of the Lord and read*," and such an injunction implies that there were copies of the Scriptures, to which they might have access. In Deuteronomy xvii. 18, the king which should be set upon the throne, is enjoined to "write him a copy of the law in a book, out of that which is before the priests the Levites: and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life." It was the neglect of this precept that so filled the heart of the good Josiah with compunction. Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, sent princes, priests, and Levites through the land with the book of the law of the Lord to teach the people; that is, they carried with them a copy of the book (see 2 Chron. xvii. 7–9). Moreover, we find in the later writings a reference to the earlier. In the books of Moses, the law implies a knowledge of the history, and of the book of Genesis. In the historical books, the Pentateuch is assumed to be known. The prophets presuppose the law and the early history. The later prophets, and the writers of the Hagiographa, refer to the earlier. Daniel refers to Jeremiah and to books which he consulted in the time of the exile (Dan. ix. 2); and the Psalms, being arranged for liturgical use in the services of the Temple and synagogues, must have been copied many times and distributed among the people. All such facts are evidences of the authority attached to the writings.

As to the authority of the writers, as they themselves understood it, we may take such instances as the following as evidence:—*Moses* claimed to have written what he wrote in

the Pentateuch, by Divine command, as we may infer from his putting it in the ark (Deut. xxxi. 22–24), and from Exod. iv. 12, and Deut. xviii. 18. *David*, the son of Jesse, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said: "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue" (2 Sam. xxiii. 2). The common form of the messages delivered by the prophets was—"*Thus saith the Lord*," "*The word of the Lord came unto me, saying*," "*The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it*" (*cf.* Jer. i. 6; Isa. vi. 9; Amos iii. 7). Such psalms as the 19th, 45th, 49th, 119th, seem founded on the conception of an authorized word of God, in the knowledge of which is the true wisdom, and whose precepts and testimonies are the work of the Spirit of God. And it was a strict injunction of Moses that the written word of the law was not to be added unto or diminished (Deut. iv. 2, and xii. 32), which, we may infer, was applied to all succeeding times; and therefore the Jews were exceedingly reluctant to write down any words, which might be supposed to be scripture, a fact which is abundant proof that what was added to the sacred volume must have been well attested, as of Divine authority.

When the Jews returned from their Captivity, we learn from Nehemiah viii. 1, 3, 9, great attention was given to the reading and expounding of the Scriptures. As the Temple had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar seventy years before that time, we must suppose that copies of the books were still in existence, for otherwise they could not have been publicly read; and some, at least, of the sacred books are thus certified to have been preserved, in copies, to the time of Ezra, which fact itself shows that the authority of the books was regarded with the utmost reverence.

Passing on to the evidence to be found in the New Testament, we may observe—

(1) The use of a collective title for the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures—αἱ γραφαὶ or ἡ γράφη, "*the Scriptures*," or, "*the Scripture*." "*Search the scriptures*," (ἐρευνᾶτε τὰς

γραφὰς) said our Lord to the men of His day; "*for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me*" (John v. 39). Addressing the freethinking Sadducees, He said: "*Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures* (μὴ εἰδότες τὰς γραφὰς), *nor the power of God*" (Matt. xxii. 29). The same use of the collective title is proved throughout the New Testament (*cf.* Matt. xxvi. 54; Luke xxiv. 27; Acts xviii. 28; 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4).

(2) The use of the separate titles, denoting the acknowledged divisions of the sacred writings; such as, "*The Law and the Prophets*," "*Moses and the Prophets*," "*The Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms.*" These titles show that all the Old Testament was recognised, by our Lord, and by His apostles, as in some sense of Divine authority.

(3) The references to individual Old Testament writers, which are found in the New Testament, imply a use of the ancient Scriptures, quite different from that of other books. Thus the quotations made were frequently introduced with the phrase, "*The Holy Ghost saith*," as in Acts i. 16, xxviii. 25, and many other passages. Our Lord, in quoting from the Psalms, identified them with the law; that is, the whole book of God was regarded by Him as standing on the same authority: "*Is it not written in your law* (ἐν τῷ νόμῳ ὑμῶν), *I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken*" (καὶ οὐ δύναται λυθῆναι ἡ γραφή), etc.

(4) The use of the title "*Word of God*," which was certainly applied to the written word of the Old Testament, by the New Testament writers, implies their unbounded reverence for them, as a Divine revelation. But here a question intervenes which it is necessary to answer. The quotations which we find in the New Testament, from the Old Testament, are mostly from the LXX. version, and in that version, as it appears to us now, are included the books of the Apocrypha. How then do we know that the Apocrypha was not regarded, by the New Testament writers, with equal reverence, and as of Divine authority? This question is easily and satisfactorily answered.

(i.) It is a well-known fact that the school of Jewish Rabbis in Palestine maintained the superiority and authority of the Hebrew Text, where the apocryphal books are not found. Those who sat in Moses' seat, would never allow the original limits of the Hebrew to be overstepped. This was a standing dispute between the two schools, the stricter school of Palestine and the laxer school of Alexandrian Jews, who, being away from Judea and under Greek influence, held less tenaciously to the original tradition of the Jewish Fathers.

(ii.) There is not a single direct quotation from the Apocrypha in the New Testament. It may be granted indeed that the New Testament writers knew the books of the Apocrypha, as they certainly used the LXX. version; and that there is some resemblance to their own writings in the book of Wisdom, together with references to books which, possibly, cannot be explained as to Old Testament books; but not only is there no direct quotation from the Apocrypha, but there is no evidence of canonical authority having been attached to any other books than those of the Old Testament. The passages which may be regarded as open to question are the following: Luke xi. 49, 51; John vii. 38; 1 Cor. ii. 9; Eph. v. 14; Jas. iv. 5; Jude 14, 15. None of these instances are necessarily references to an apocryphal book, except the last, that in Jude, where the words are undoubtedly from some extra-scriptural source, though not certainly from the apocryphal book of Enoch. The words do correspond substantially with the apocryphal book, of which there still exists an Ethiopic translation, but the opinion of Dr. Westcott on the passage is as follows:—"From the form in which the quotation occurs, it is impossible to determine whether St. Jude derived it from tradition or from the apocryphal book. Yet as the book of Enoch was widely circulated at a very early time, it seems almost certain that the quotation was made directly from it. St. Jude simply adopts the language of his time in speaking of words with which his readers are probably familiar." But, it may be added, the book of Enoch itself may have embodied

certain ancient traditions which came down from patriarchal times, although there is no evidence of such having been preserved, beyond what is found in the reference of St. Jude. While there is nothing, therefore, in the New Testament which can be rightly regarded as a divergence from the authority of the Old Testament, there is, on the other hand, abundant evidence of the acknowledgment of the Old Testament canon. Of direct quotations from the Old Testament writers, in the New Testament, there are 263, and these cover almost the whole book, being taken from nearly every writer; while there are allusions, which amount almost to quotations, still more numerous, upwards of 350. (See these quotations and allusions fully treated in Angus' "Handbook of the Bible," ch. vi. § 1.) It is stated by St. Paul to have been the special, solemn duty and responsibility of the Jews to preserve and hand down "the oracles of God" (*τὰ λόγια τοῦ Θεοῦ*)—Rom. iii. 2, which were "*committed*" unto them; and although they failed to fulfil their commission to some extent, the transcription of the original sacred books being far from as perfect as it might have been, still we have every reason to believe that the Palestinian Jews jealously guarded the Scripture from spurious addition and disintegration. This, however, is a question of history to which we must refer at greater length. We pass on, then, to the next point of the argument.

2. *The history of the Old Testament canon so far as it can be traced.* Here we must be brief, as the subject is very wide. Westcott "On the Old Testament Canon," and the articles "*Canon*" and "*Old Testament*," in Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," with Keil's "Introduction to the Old Testament," will furnish the more detailed authorities for the statements which are here put together; Davidson's little work "On the Canon of the Bible" may be consulted with caution, but not implicitly followed. Notwithstanding all the reverence which ancient Jews maintained, particularly in Palestine, for the letter of Scripture, it is a remarkable fact that all the MSS. we possess in Hebrew are of late, post-Christian origin; some few belong

to the eighth and ninth centuries (two, Nos. 634, 503, the readings of which were published by M. de Rossi), but most of them between A.D. 1000 and A.D. 1457. After that time, the MSS. were printed sometimes in portions, and sometimes the whole of the Old Testament. The present Hebrew text is the Masoretic—that is, the text which was published with the authority of the *Masoretic Jews*, the school which flourished from the sixth to the ninth century, to whom we owe the great work the *Masora*, a collection of traditional materials for the critical interpretation of Scripture. The vowel points of the Hebrew were added by the scholars of that period, and these are supposed to preserve traditional readings and interpretations, the word Masora signifying *Tradition*. The chief importance of the labours of the Masoretes was the supplying the original Hebrew with the points, and the marginal readings. There have been many MSS. discovered of different periods, but they are said by scholars to have varied but little from our present Hebrew text.

Supposing, then, that we possess what is substantially the same Hebrew Bible used in the time of our Lord, the question is next suggested, when was the present canon fixed? and by whom was the present canon, closing with the prophet Malachi, determined? These are questions which cannot be decided by direct evidence. Before the time of the Jewish Captivity, although there are references to the "*book of the law*" (Isa. xxx. 16; *cf.* xxix. 18), and to the word of the Lord, and to "the Psalms" and "the prophets," which imply the existence of sacred books acknowledged as of Divine authority, there is no evidence of a canon of Scripture—that is, of a collection of sacred books put together, all as of one standing. "Even after the Captivity," says Dr. Westcott,[1] "the history of the canon, like all Jewish history up to the date of the Maccabees, is wrapt in great obscurity. Faint traditions alone remain to interpret results which are found realized when the darkness is first cleared away. Popular belief assigned to Ezra and "*the*

[1] Art. "Canon," Smith's Dictionary.

great synagogue" the task of collecting and promulgating the Scriptures, as part of their work in organizing the Jewish Church. Doubts have been thrown upon this belief (Rau, "De Synog. Magnâ," 1726; *cf.* Ewald: "Geschichte des Volkes Isr." iv. 191), and it is difficult to remove them, from the scantiness of the evidence which can be adduced; but the belief is in every way consistent with the history of Judaism and with the internal evidence of the books themselves. The later embellishments of the tradition, which represent Ezra as the second author of all the books (2 Esdras), or define more exactly the nature of his work, can only be accepted as signs of the universal belief in his labours, and ought not to cast discredit upon the simple fact that the foundation of the canon is due to him."

The view which has been put forward in recent times (see Davidson "On the Canon") is, that there were in fact three canons, commencing with the time of Ezra and going on to the time of Christ; that Ezra the priest and scribe only authorized the Pentateuch and the book of Joshua; that there was then a gradual collection of sacred books from the close of the fourth century B.C. to about 300 B.C., which, having been commenced by Nehemiah, was called the Canon of Nehemiah; and that after the third century other books were added, and the canon of Scripture remained open, embracing the apocryphal books. But this view is founded upon statements in the apocryphal books themselves, as in the fourth book of Ezra (2 Esdras), and is certainly contradicted by the traditions of the Palestinian Jews, who never received the LXX. as of equal authority with the canonical books of the Old Testament.

In 2 Macc. ii. 13 is probably preserved an Alexandrian tradition concerning Nehemiah. He is said to have brought together into a library the writings of the kings and prophets, and of David and others. (*τὰ περὶ τῶν βασιλέων καὶ προφητῶν καὶ τά τοῦ Δαυὶδ καὶ ἐπιστολὰς βασιλέων περὶ ἀναθημάτων.*) The latter part of the passage, "the epistles of the kings concerning consecration gifts," is somewhat obscure, but it may be

taken, as a whole, as confirming the formation of a canon, though it was a gradual formation. This would be the natural result of the unsettlement of the Jewish Church after the return from the Captivity. Only as the people of God were constituted into a settled community, would they be in a position to examine and authorize the sacred books, and separate them from all others. The tradition of the Talmud and the Rabbinical writings, was that there was a gathering together of learned and devout men into a great synagogue (כְּנֶסֶת הַגְּדוֹלָה). Among them were Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, and afterwards Simon the Just, not of course sitting together at one time, but holding their meetings through a long period. The Mishna mentions such a body. It was constituted of 120 members. Keil remarks, however, concerning this tradition: "All that we can accept is this, that Ezra and Nehemiah had assistants who supported them in their labours to restore and confirm the institutions in Church and State, and therefore in what they did towards collecting the sacred writings of the people. Some have doubted the existence of such a college. There is no trace of it in the writings of Ezra and Nehemiah, nor in Josephus and Philo."

But admitting that there is a period, from the time of the Captivity to the time of the LXX. (285 B.C.), during which the state of the canon was uncertain, still the fact that synagogues increased largely after the Captivity, and that copies of the Scriptures would be required in the synagogue worship, seems to point to the closing of the canon soon after the return of the Jews. Then, the universal rejection, by the Palestinian Jews, of the additions found in the LXX., again points to the closing of the canon before the third century. When we come to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (168 B.C.), we find the persecutions of the heathen king acting in a most salutary manner upon the religious life of the Jews; and as in New Testament times the persecutions of Diocletian led to the confirmation of the New Testament canon, so that of Antiochus helped the people of God to put aside the spurious and adhere to the

genuine. "The king sought out the *books of the law* (τὰ βιβλία τοῦ νομοῦ, 1 Macc. i. 56) and burnt them; and the possession of a *book of the covenant* (βιβλίον διαθήκης) was a capital crime." After the time of the Maccabees, the books of Scripture were regarded as "*a whole*"—that is, they were regarded as all canonical, though holding different places in the reverence of the people.

The division of the sacred writings into three parts, "*the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa*," was certainly established long before the Christian era. Such a division points to the existence of what we call the canon of Scripture, although it may be allowed that the last of these divisions, "*the Hagiographa*," may have remained open to a much later age than the time of Malachi, about 400 B.C. The evidence, therefore, of the history of the canon, though it is doubtful in parts, contributes to confirm the authority of the present books of the Old Testament as accepted by the Jews from the third century B.C. We have no evidence which would invalidate the canon. There is no book which can claim to have been written between 400 B.C. and 300 B.C., and the probability is that the first Greek translation which was made included no more than the Old Testament books, for our present copies of the LXX. are certainly not the exact transcript of the earliest Greek Bible. As we know that the Alexandrian Jews were much less strict in their views of Scripture than those of Palestine, we can easily understand that between 285 B.C. and the Christian era other books would be added which had no authority among the Jews generally, but which were incorporated in subsequent editions of the LXX. This subject, however, is involved in so much obscurity that all we are able to affirm is that the evidence of the present LXX. cannot be brought against the Hebrew canon.

We now pass on to the more important argument which is drawn from

3. *The testimony of the Jewish schools and of individual Jewish writers.* When the Babylonish Captivity broke the

bond of connection between the Jewish national life and the sacred writings, in so far as the language of the people was concerned, and Hebrew became to a certain extent a dead language, being superseded by the cognate Chaldee, there arose a class of men who especially devoted themselves to the study and propagation of the Scriptures. These were the Sopherim or Scribes. They were soon divided into schools. In the East they flourished from the time of the Captivity to the tenth century A.D., after which time they were succeeded by the schools of the West, on the north coast of Africa, in Spain (at Granada, Toledo, and Barcelona), and partly in France, in the fifteenth century in Germany. Until the destruction of the capital, the chief seat of the Eastern school was *Jerusalem.* It was then removed to *Tiberias;* and contemporary with Tiberias, and subsequent to its decline, there flourished an important school of learned rabbis in *Babylonia.* Previous to the fall of Jerusalem, the school of ancient scribes occupied themselves with the settlement of the text of Scripture, its arrangement and division. And during the same period originated the Targums or Chaldee paraphrases, written in the popular dialect. To this most ancient school succeeded the school of *the Talmudists*, from the second to the sixth century A.D. They added little to the authority of the texts. They elucidated the judicial and ritual contents of the sacred books, and collected together the oral traditions of the Pharisees in the *Talmud, i.e.*, the Mishna and the two Gemaras (the Jerusalem and the Babylonian). After the Talmudists came the Masoretes, the authors of the *Masora*, a great body of tradition, from the sixth to the ninth (or, as some say, eleventh) century A.D. They republished the sacred volume with vowel points and various readings; and after their time, when the text of the Old Testament might be regarded as fixed, there followed the period of the *Grammarians and Expositors*, from the ninth or eleventh century to the sixteenth. Their labours were chiefly grammatical, and in the Aramean and Arabic dialects. Now, while it must be admitted that for the

criticism of particular readings it is impossible to rely on any one source of authority alone, either the Masoretic traditionary readings or the Greek versions, yet for the authority of the books as a whole we may safely appeal to the labours of the Jewish schools. They discussed the minute differences with immense learning, yet they never disagreed, after the time of the Masoretes, on the fundamental point, what books should be regarded as canonical, and we may fairly presume that the Old Testament text as it stands was accepted by the whole Jewish nation as that which came down to them from the time of Malachi.

To this general testimony of the schools may be added that of individuals. The two whose names stand highest are *Josephus* and *Philo.*

Josephus was born A.D. 37, died after 97 A.D. He numbers the books of the Old Testament as twenty-two, and dates the close of the canon in the time of Artaxerxes Longimanus (450 B.C.). His words are: "From the time of Artaxerxes to our own time each event has been recorded; but the records have not been deemed worthy of the same credit as those of earlier date, because the exact succession of the prophets was not continued. But what faith we have placed in our own writings is seen in our conduct; for though so long a time has now passed, no one has dared either to add anything to them, or to take anything from them, or to alter anything."[1] Surely a man of such authority as Josephus would not have ventured upon such a statement as that, had the apocryphal books been regarded as of equal value with the books of the Old Testament by the Palestinian Jews. As to what the Alexandrian Jews thought, it is of much less importance, as they were laxer in their view of inspiration, and would easily admit new books on the same footing.

Philo was born at Alexandria about 20 B.C., and was contemporary with our Lord. He represented every way the Alexandrian or Greek mind. But Philo held the same regard

[1] "Cont. Ap.," i. 7, 9.

for the books of the Old Testament, placing the Pentateuch first in authority, but not doubting the inspiration of the remaining books, though the theory of the Alexandrian school being that inspiration continued after the last prophet, they attached a sacredness to other books. It is quite certain that Philo never quotes the language of the apocryphal books as though they were of the same authority as Scripture.

4. *The testimony of the early Christian Fathers.* When we have left the Jewish ground, and begin to deal with the writers of the early Christian Church, we find ourselves in a totally different atmosphere. The knowledge of Hebrew was but scanty among the patristic authors, and the constant use of the Greek version of the Old Testament familiarized their minds with a looser standard of canonical authority than prevailed among the Jewish scholars. Hence we find the early Fathers quoting the LXX., without distinction between the canonical and uncanonical portions, and even in enumerating the books of the Old Testament. Such writers as Origen were careless and incorrect; Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Cyprian, all erred in this respect. *Jerome*, however, the author of the Vulgate version, follows the Hebrew exactly. It is also interesting to notice that the Jewish Christians or Nazarenes, adhered to the Old Testament. *Justin Martyr* (born 89 A.D., died 163 A.D.) never quotes the Apocrypha. The Greek Church, as early as the fourth century, passed decrees in council, declaring the number and names of the Old Testament books (as at Laodicea A.D. 360–364), and by episcopal letters forbade the reading of the Apocrypha. The Syrian Church never acknowledged any other books than the Hebrew. It was only in the Latin or Western Church that the question remained open. The books of the Apocrypha were distinguished from Scripture, but acknowledged as *Libri Ecclesiastici*, that is, as authorized by the Church for reading in the congregation.[1] This is admitted, however, that the apocryphal books are not placed in any *catalogue* of canonical writings

[1] Hippo, 393, and Carthage, 419.

during the first four centuries, which is sufficient evidence that, however carelessly used by the Fathers, they were not held as of equal authority with the Hebrew Scriptures. On the whole, the testimony of the early Christian Church is to the use of our present Hebrew Bible as distinct from the Apocrypha; and this, added to the testimony of the Jews themselves, which in their strictest schools is undoubted, must satisfy every careful student that, whatever discussions may be permitted on the authenticity of individual books, the present form of the Hebrew Bible is that which came down to the Jews from the third or fourth century B.C., and therefore, in the absence of any contradictory evidence, must be accepted as the canon of the Old Testament, settled at that time. What we find in the pages of the Old Testament writers may safely be regarded as written centuries before the Christian era, and that is the main point of this argument for the authority of revelation as a whole.

II. *The main points of the argument for the authority of the New Testament canon.*

Before these points are described, it is necessary to observe that whatever degree of obscurity and uncertainty may surround the direct evidence adduced for the canon of the New Testament, the question of the origin of the apostolic writings is involved in a broader question, the origin of the apostolic Church. The doubts which may remain after the utmost research into the history of documents, can scarcely attach to the simple facts of the Christian life. Just as the commencement of a national existence is often indistinguishable in the shadows of the remote past, because those elements of a nation's earliest growth were not sufficiently developed to become mutually observant,—in other words, the life of the nation, though real and progressive, was not reflective and self-conscious in its early childhood,—so, when the Christianity of the Church was mainly aggressive, unorganized, undeveloped, the records of that primitive Christianity will be presented to us in a form which involves the possibility of doubt, and the evidence must, in some instances, be open to question. The

apostles and their fellow-labourers were not commissioned to write the New Testament as we find it now, nor to prepare the documents of the early Church for the examination of critics. They preached, called men together into Christian communities, living representatives of Christian doctrine. The writings which have come down to us sprang out of the Church life of the time, and are rather the *unconscious reflection* of primitive Christianity in the writings of those who were actively engaged in diffusing it, than a *deliberate transcript.* The *Epistles* were the remains of apostolic intercourse with churches and individuals. The *Gospels* were probably fragmentary recollections of facts and discourses of the Lord Jesus, collected together mostly from the discourses of apostles, at first not written at all, but gradually assuming a fixed form as they were made familiar in the churches, and under the superintendence and correction of surviving apostolic witnesses. The chief point for the believer to maintain at the present day is, not that the Gospels were undoubtedly the work of the men whose names are attached to them, although that can be well supported, but that they are the genuine reflection of apostolic preaching and authority. It has been remarked by Dr. Westcott that the very existence of the New Testament is a moral miracle, which carries its own authority with it. The training of the Jews, especially in Palestine, was *oral* and exclusively oral. The rabbis always insisted on the importance of clinging to the Old Testament Scriptures, and not attempting to add to them by writing anything down. The first Christians being Jews came under the influence of this Jewish feeling of reluctance to make Scripture. "That the New Testament should have been written by Jews (and St. Luke is the only Gentile, if indeed he was a Gentile, among the apostolic writers), is a moral miracle of overwhelming dignity, if only account be taken of the traditions and prejudices among which they, like all their countrymen, were born and reared."[1] But in meeting the doubts of the modern critical school, it is chiefly important to

[1] "Bible in the Church," ch. ii.

deal with the facts which we are able to adduce to prove the apostolic origin of the books. We begin then, as before in the case of the Old Testament, with the internal evidence derived from the writings themselves. From the *internal* evidence we pass to the *external* evidence, which is of three kinds :—(1) The evidence of *Catalogues* of the New Testament; (2) that of the *Versions*; and (3) that of *Quotations* in the writings of the early Fathers.

1. *Evidence derived from the New Testament itself.* This may be divided into two chief portions. (1) That which is found in the Epistles confirming the Gospels. (2) That which is derived from the correspondence between the history narrated in the book of the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of St. Paul. The latter is fully described in the masterly work of Paley, "Horæ Paulinæ," to which the reader is referred, but will be touched upon later in this chapter in considering the statements advanced by a recent critic in the anonymous work "Supernatural Religion." We shall, therefore, in this place, confine our notice of the arguments from the New Testament, to the testimony borne by the Epistles to the substance of the Gospels. There are four of the Pauline Epistles which have stood the severest examination of the modern Criticism, and remain virtually unchallenged. These are, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Romans and Galatians. These are undoubtedly genuine remains of the apostle Paul. Now it is admitted that there is in these Epistles no actual quotation from any of the Gospels. There could be none, because it is altogether inconceivable that they should have been written, at least *any length of time* after them. The fourth Gospel must be referred to the latter part of the first century, after the death of Paul. The first three may have been composed previous to the death of Paul, but were not likely to have obtained any circulation before that time. A.D. 66. But although there is no quotation from the Gospels, there are many allusions to gospel facts. Referring to the last supper, to the passion of our Lord, and to the resurrection, the apostle speaks of having received "that which was de-

livered to him" (see 1 Cor. xi. 23; 1 Cor. xv. 3). The expression κατὰ τὰς γραφάς, employed of the resurrection, is generally taken to mean that the event fulfilled the predictions of ancient prophecy; but there is no impossibility in supposing that records of the gospel facts were in existence, and in use in the congregations of Christians, although not put together in the form in which we now possess them. That very soon after this time Epistles themselves were so described, is seen in the use of the term γραφὰς by St. Peter (2 Pet. iii. 16) of the writings of St. Paul ("as they do also the other Scriptures"—τὰς λοιπὰς γραφὰς). But apart from this, the four Epistles of Paul just mentioned, which are undoubtedly received as genuine, refer to almost all the principal facts of the Saviour's history,—His incarnation, miracles, death, resurrection and ascension (see Rom. i. 3, 4; iv. 24, 25; v.; vi.; 1 Cor. i. 17, 23; xi. 23, 24; xii. 3; xv. 1–8; 2 Cor. iv. 14; v. 15, 21; Gal. iii. 1, 13; vi. 14, etc.),—and imply throughout the acceptance generally among their readers of the gospel as we now read it (see this argument more fully employed in the work of Mr. Isaac Taylor, "The Restoration of Belief," to which reference was made in the chapter on miracles). As to the remaining Epistles, while some are rejected by critics as unauthentic, such as 2 Peter, Ephesians, 2 Timothy, etc., still it cannot be doubted that they are all of early origin, and if not written by the apostles whose names they bear, were certainly composed by those who knew to whom they were writing, and would not, indeed could not, have passed at any time as apostolic writings had they not reflected with tolerable accuracy the current belief of the time. Now the references to Epistles of Paul which we find in Ignatius, Polycarp, and Clement of Rome, are evidence that they were very early accepted as genuine. And although there were some Epistles, as 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, James, Jude, which were received into the canon only very late and after much controversy, yet that throws no doubt on the rest, but rather proves that the early Church proceeded with great caution in admitting books the evidence of which could be disputed.

The facts of the Gospels are the underlying basis on which the whole of the Epistles rest. The history of Jesus Christ could be written, substantially agreeing with the evangelical record, by references found in the apostolic writings. Nor can the lack of particulars, the absence of allusion to any special miracles of our Lord, except the greatest of all, the resurrection and ascension, be regarded as any disparagement of the gospel narrative; for it must be remembered, that while we are told of miracles and signs wrought, both by the Lord and by those who bare witness of Him (see Heb. i. 2; ii. 4, etc.), the readers of the Epistles would not need that any more particular account should be added of such miracles, for they would be familiar with the narrative of the Gospels. It may be well also to bear in mind that the tradition of the early Church, that the two Gospels, of St. Mark and St. Luke, represented the preaching and authority of the two leading apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, is borne out by the character of those Gospels; and the evident Jewish character of the first Gospel, Matthew, would point to its being of early origin, as the Church at Jerusalem was the first formed, and represented the authority of all the apostles, who were witnesses of the Lord's life. Not only are the Gospels confirmed by the Epistles, but the Epistles themselves bear upon their very face the claim to be received as of special authority. They were to be read in all the churches, and the doctrine contained in them was set forth as the teaching of the Spirit (see such passages as 1 Thess. v. 27; 2 Thess. iii. 6; Col. iv. 16; 1 Tim. iv. 1; 2 Tim. i. 11; Rev. xxii. 18, 19). In 2 Pet. i. 12–18, we have not only an allusion to gospel facts, such as the voice from heaven proclaiming the authority of Jesus, and His transfiguration, but an intimation that the apostle would give direction for the preparation of a Gospel with his apostolic authority attached to it. "*Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables* (σεσοφισμένοις μύθοις), *when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but*

were eyewitnesses of His majesty" (2 Pet. i. 15, 16). This passage will of course be rejected as evidence by those who deny the authenticity of the Epistle, but some of the best critics have satisfied themselves that the sanction which was given to it by the early Church, as recorded by Eusebius, was the result of sufficient evidence. It is certainly very different from anything which appeared after the first century; and the conclusion in which such a man as Dean Alford rested after a very careful and scholarly examination of the evidence, cannot be rejected by any candid mind as unfounded, notwithstanding the difficulty of the question. "It is one of those latter fruits of the great outpouring of the Spirit upon the apostles which not being entrusted to the custody of any one Church or individual, required some considerable time to become generally known; which, when known, were suspected, bearing, as they necessarily did, traces of their late origin, and notes of polemical argument; but of which, as apostolic and inspired writings, there never was, when once they became known, any general doubt, and which, as the second canon became fixed, acquired, and have since maintained, their due and providential place among the books of the New Testament." (See the authorities adduced in Alford's New Testament, vol. iv. pt. 1.)

In concluding these brief outlines of the internal evidence to be drawn from the New Testament writings themselves, we would refer to the promise of the Lord Jesus Himself, recorded by St. John xiv., xv., xvi., that the Spirit of God should especially dwell with the apostles, and "*bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever He had said unto them* (xiv. 26), *guiding them into all truth, and showing them things to come*" (xvi. 13). Such words could not have been an afterthought of apostles, for they are introduced into the Lord's discourses in a manner which forbids such a supposition. Thus the Gospels and Epistles reflect each other. They form one harmonious whole. Nor is it possible to imagine any of the writings of the New Testament to have been the production of any known author of the second century. Let any careful student compare

together the remains of the apostolical Fathers, or of such men as Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, with the New Testament, and he must be convinced that, whatever the evidence for the authenticity of the sacred books, whether satisfactory or not, they certainly cannot be ascribed to any of those whose writings remain to us. This, added to the fact that the early Church received most of them without dispute, and the rest, after long controversy, but with entire unanimity at last, will certainly afford a strong *primâ facie* argument for their authority. At present, this is all we adduce. The internal evidence cannot of itself be conclusive. We now proceed to put together in a very succinct manner, which is all that our limits admit, the external evidence for the New Testament.

2. *External evidence of the New Testament books.* The New Testament, as we now receive it, is the result of a careful examination of many manuscripts and versions. As the title of our English authorized version expresses it, it is a translation "out of the original Greek, and with the former translations diligently compared and revised." The received Greek text, or Textus Receptus, was founded upon texts made about the time of the Reformation. But since that time many new manuscripts have been examined, and the work of editing and recension has been carried on with immense industry. The discovery of the Sinaitic MS. by Tischendorf at the monastery of St. Catherine, on mount Sinai, in 1844, and its removal to St. Petersburg in 1859, has given a fresh impetus to the work of revision. "These early MSS.," says Dr. Westcott, "are living monuments of the ecclesiastical usage of the Christian Church, as to the books of Scripture, at the time of its first connection with the empire. Their evidence, consequently, has an interest, though not an authority, greater than that which would attach to the decision of an individual. They express, in all probability, a popular and not a critical opinion." The Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus (ℵ and B) are of the fourth century. The Codex Alexandrinus (A) of the fifth, and

Ephraem (C) of the sixth century, and that of Beza (D) of the fifth or seventh. But while we have no manuscripts of very early origin, we possess, in lieu of them, three kinds of evidence confirmatory of the authority of the books, the evidence of *Catalogues*, of *Versions*, and of *Quotations*. These we can put together, and thus, both as to the books as a whole and as to their contents, we obtain satisfactory proof of authenticity.

(1) *The Catalogues.* The catalogues were canonical lists of the books of the Bible. No canon, properly speaking, existed, or could exist, until the conception of a catholic Church was, in some degree, developed and established. That there was very early a feeling attached to the sacred writings, which resembled what was afterwards expressed in the term canon, is seen by the allusions to the writings of St. Paul, by Clement of Rome, and to the Gospels, by Justin Martyr, early in the second century. But the first *decided* evidence (apart from uncertain indications, such as may be found in the writings of Marcion, as we shall see presently), is in the *Muratorian Fragment.* This was a Latin fragment, discovered in the Ambrosian library at Milan, and published by the librarian *Muratori.* The Latin itself is supposed to be of about the eighth century, but the Greek original of which it is a translation must have been written from 160 to 170 A.D. Such is the decision of eminent scholars. This fragment gives a catalogue of some of the writings of Scripture, together with those of Hermas, Valentinus, Basilides, etc. It enumerates all the New Testament books except 1 John, 1 Peter, James, Hebrews, and 2 Peter.

Peshito Catalogue. The Peshito version, or ancient Syriac, is of very early date. Its authority was recognised among all the Syrian churches. It adds to the list in the Muratorian Fragment, the remaining books of the New Testament.

From 200 A.D. to 400 A.D. fifteen catalogues were published. *Six* of them agree with the present canon. *Three* omit only the Apocalypse. *One*, the catalogue of *Caius*, probably A.D. 196, omits James, 2 Peter, 3 John, Hebrews. Origen's (born

186 A.D.) omits only James and Jude. Other unimportant differences occur; but, on the whole, the evidence of the canonical lists which appeared after the second century, confirms the authority of the New Testament books, though admitting some others, now regarded as extra-scriptural, to the acknowledged use of the Church. While these catalogues expressed the current opinion of the time in which they were made, they also preserved the tradition of the elders. Their admission of extra-scriptural books does not, therefore, invalidate their testimony to the New Testament writings.

(2) *The Versions.* These are evidence of the acceptance of the books rendered in them, by those churches for whom the version was prepared; and it is particularly valuable evidence, as it goes back to a much earlier date than any existing manuscript. It will be sufficient in this place if we enumerate some of the most important of these versions. (i.) *The Peshito, or early Syriac*, probably of the second century. (ii.) *The Italic, or early Latin*, founded on the LXX., probably made from the Alexandrian MS., quoted by Tertullian in 220 A.D., and ascribed by Eichhorn to the first century. Some fragments are still remaining. (iii.) *The Vulgate of Jerome* (A.D. 382), was a revision of the Italic version. Twenty years were given by Jerome to its preparation. It was completed in A.D. 405, and two centuries later, having been received as of equal authority with the LXX., was called the Vulgate. (iv.) *The Armenian* version, made under the care of Miesrob, the inventor of the Armenian alphabet, in the 5th century. (v.) *Gothic of Ulphilas* (middle of fourth century). (vi.) Greek of Philoxenus, taken from the Syriac, in the sixth century. (vii.) *The Georgian*, in the sixth century. (viii.) *The Slavonic, or Old Russian*, in the ninth century, of great critical value. To these may be added the *Curetonian Syriac*, brought by Dr. Cureton from the monastery of Nitria, in mount Athos, in 1842, the Gospels of which Dr. Cureton thinks of the *fifth* century; though, as a whole, it differs considerably from the received text. All these versions have been consulted largely by critics in their re-

censions. Their evidence is confirmatory of the Greek MSS. as a whole, while corrective of the readings.

(3) Evidence of the *early Christian Fathers, or of Quotations.* This evidence is of the utmost value, as it goes back to a very early period; and although not absolutely trustworthy in some cases, still, taken together, produces a general conviction of the genuineness of the sacred writings, not to be resisted. It would be impossible in the present work to do justice to the argument for canonicity, in the case of the *Epistles*, as the space required would be disproportionate, but it will be sufficient if we review, that which has been the most violently assailed by the rationalistic critics of the day—the argument for the authority of the four Gospels, as acknowledged by the Christian writers of the second and third centuries. If they are attested, the authority of the Epistles will not be doubted as a whole. The case of each separate epistle can be studied in such works as Alford's Greek Testament, Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," or Lightfoot, or Ellicott "On the Epistles."

From the time of Semler down to the most recent rationalistic work in this country, "Supernatural Religion," the main stress of the conflict between the advocates and the opponents of Scripture has borne upon the question of the genuineness and authenticity of the Gospels. It is not, of course, denied that there were Gospels in existence in the first century, but it is boldly affirmed that there is no sufficient proof that the Gospels which we now possess are identical with those which were read by the first Christians. This is a question which cannot be settled by a reference to autograph manuscripts, for our earliest MSS. of the Gospels reach back, as we have seen, no further than the fourth century. We must, therefore, depend upon evidence which can be gathered from early Christian writers.

The most important quotations will be those from writers of the second century; for if we find that words, taken from some gospels, are found quoted in that century, we may fairly presume that such gospels were in existence in the first century; and

if they correspond, substantially, with what is in our present Gospels, then it devolves upon the doubter to show that they were not taken from them, but from some others. The fact that there were many fragmentary accounts of our Lord, existing at one time, to which it is possible that St. Luke refers in the preface to his Gospel, is no proof at all that our Synoptical Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, were not regarded as authoritative, in the second century. The author of "Supernatural Religion" seems to aim at too much, for in endeavouring to prove that other gospels may have existed, and that the quotations which we find in Christian writers may have been taken from them, and not from our Gospels, he is simply beating the air. Until the supposed neglect of our Gospels, by Christian writers, can be shown to have been their rejection of their authority, the argument is irrelevant; for the slight variations are quite consistent with substantial agreement. Here are certain documents, said to be primitive records of the first century. Certain quotations, found in the second century, correspond, some exactly, some nearly, some in matter though not in form, with passages found in those documents. Then, of what avail is it to suggest the doubt, that such quotations might be taken from other gospels, which have perished? Is not the fact, that such gospels perished, itself a proof that they did not as accurately reflect the belief of the early Christians as those which have remained? "Requiring," says the anonymous author referred to, "as we do, clear, direct, and irrefragable evidence of their integrity, authenticity, and historical character, any doubt or obscurity, on these points, must inevitably be fatal to them as sufficient testimony, if they could under any circumstances be considered sufficient testimony, for miracles, and a direct Divine revelation, like ecclesiastical Christianity." In other words, the same kind of evidence which convinces us that we possess the writings of classic authors, for which we have not anything like the same body of proof that we have for the Gospels, will not be sufficient to overcome our prejudice against these books, *because they contain the accounts of miracles.*

But that is to reason *à priori*, and not with an unprejudiced mind, and upon fair induction. If the Gospels are the authentic productions of the age and men whose authority they claim, then they certainly do testify to miracles; *à priori* objections to the contents are worthless. The evidence of miracles, in the first century, is, as we shall see, so full and strong, that they can be rejected only by a sweeping scepticism, which rejects the whole of Paul's Epistles, and indeed the whole of the New Testament.

Let us now examine the positive evidence, first, as to the Synoptical Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke; and then, as to the fourth Gospel, which, in the present day, has been made the battle-ground of the fiercest controversy. There are certain Christian writings, dating from the early portion of the second century, in which there occur allusions, and apparently quotations, which confirm the Gospels. These are *the Apostolical Fathers*, Clement of Rome, Barnabas, Ignatius, Polycarp, etc. Before adducing instances, let it be remembered, that, in the case of the quotations found in these writers from the Old Testament, of which there are very many, a loose and very inexact method is evident, showing that the writers sometimes used second-hand sources, sometimes a careless memory, and sometimes paraphrase. We can scarcely doubt that they treated the New Testament in the same manner. Exact correspondence with the words, therefore, can scarcely be expected. This it is of the utmost importance to bear in mind.

Clemens Romanus, was probably one of the earliest bishops of Rome, as we learn from Irenæus and Eusebius, and, according to some, was the Clement mentioned by St. Paul, as his fellow-labourer, in Phil. iv. 3. His *first epistle to the Corinthians*, found among the writings of the apostolical Fathers, is admitted, by all parties, to be beyond dispute a genuine production of a very early date. Whether it was Clement's or not, is of no consequence to the argument. "The great mass of critics," says the author of "Supernatural Religion," "assign it to some date between A.D. 95 and A.D. 100." It is, virtually, contemporary with the apostle John. Now, in this writing, are two

passages, without question quotations from our Gospels (ch. xiii. and ch. xlvi.); from the Sermon on the Mount, and from the discourse on offences: "For thus Jesus spoke, Be ye merciful, that ye may obtain mercy," etc. "Remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, how He said, Woe to that man [by whom offences come], it were better for him that he had never been born," etc. The quotations are loose, but so are all Clement's quotations.

Barnabas, is supposed to have been Paul's fellow-labourer (see Acts iv. and ix.). His epistle was certainly not later than 130 A.D. The most important issue is raised on one quotation, found in chap. iv., "Many are called, but few chosen," corresponding exactly with Matt. xxii. 14: πολλοὶ γάρ εἰσι κλητοὶ, ὀλίγοι δὲ ἐκλεκτοί. The critics here suggest that the resemblance is accidental! that the quotation is really from the fourth book of Ezra (2 Esdras) viii. 3: "Many are created, but few shall be saved"! Such paradox may be passed by with silent contempt. Other passages point to the Gospels, though not so explicitly.

Ignatius, was bishop of Antioch, and suffered martyrdom under Trajan, 115 A.D. The epistles which bear his name have been matter of prolonged controversy. Some reject them all as spurious; but it can scarcely be doubted that the *three* Curetonian, or Syriac epistles, discovered by Dr. Cureton, are genuine, and they are dated, by Dr. Lightfoot, from A.D. 107 to A.D. 115. The shorter Greek recension of *Seven Epistles*, called the "Vossian Letters," may date from about the middle of the second century. The quotations, of any sort, are but few in these epistles, but such as they are, while not exact, they point to the use of, either our present Gospels, or some documents like them.

Polycarp, was bishop of Smyrna, and according to tradition a disciple of St. John; he suffered martyrdom under M. Aurelius 168 A.D. His epistle to the Philippians, if genuine, must have been written, therefore, before 167 or 8, probably from 140 to 145 A.D. The allusions to the Gospels are not distinct, but

still seem to coincide with them. He quotes from the Lord's prayer, and refers to the saying, "The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak," chap vii.; and in chap. ii. from the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are ye poor," etc.

We may conclude these references to the apostolical Fathers with the following remarks from Dr. Westcott:[1] "It can create no surprise, if the testimony of the apostolical Fathers is to the substance, and not to the authenticity, of the Gospels. It establishes an important fact: even in the first generation after the apostles, the contents of the gospel were fixed within their present limits. Some mysterious workings of Providence suppressed the countless multitude of *things which Jesus did*, of which the apostles could have told. Two sayings of our Lord are preserved, in the letters of Barnabas and Ignatius, which are not contained in the Gospels, and may possibly be independent and original, but otherwise, the great outlines of His life and teaching which can be drawn from the apostolical Fathers, exactly coincide with those preserved in the first three Gospels." The apostolical Fathers had no idea of a definite collected New Testament, equal in authority with the Old; but, it should be added, they refer very frequently and distinctly to the writings of the apostles, especially to those of St. Paul, and he, as we have seen, confirms the main facts of the gospel history; so that, both directly and indirectly, they testify to the authority of the Gospels. We pass on, then, to those who followed the apostolical Fathers.

Justin Martyr (born about 89 A.D., was martyred about 163 A.D), a philosopher by vocation, afterwards a Christian. Many spurious works are attributed to him, but three are undoubtedly genuine—two Apologies, 147 A.D. to 150 A.D.; and the "Dialogue against Trypho," a little later. Justin speaks distinctly of records which he calls "memoirs of the apostles," using a phrase borrowed from the "Memorabilia" of Xenophon: "The memoirs of the apostles, or the writings of the prophets, are read as long as the time admits" ("Apol.," I. 67);

[1] "Bible in the Church," p. 82.

and in another place ("Apol.," I. 66) he adds— ἃ καλεῖται εὐαγγελία, "which are called Gospels." A manifest interpolation, say the critics. But we may ask, why so? "Because," says one, "he would have said, '*the four Gospels!*'" Can anything be more strained? Another quotation is distinctly referred "*to the gospel.*" Substantially, Justin confirms all the facts narrated in our Gospels. If he made use of other documents, they must have corresponded with our Gospels. In ten instances he quotes the exact words of Matthew; in one, of Luke; in twenty-five, from both, with slight variations; and in thirty-two, with general agreement in sense, though with marked difference in words. Mark's Gospel he, possibly, does not refer to. "The *à priori* probabilities of the case," says Dr. Sanday, in his "Gospels in the Second Century," "as well as the actual phenomena, alike tend to show that Justin did make use, either mediately or immediately, of our Gospels, but that he did not assign to them an exclusive authority, and that he probably made use, along with them, of other documents no longer extant." Teaching at that time was chiefly oral. The texts, of both the Old and New Testaments, were in an uncertain state, and tradition added to the evangelic records; but that Justin confirms our Gospels, is seen from the fact that, were they lost, the whole substance of the evangelical history could be reproduced from his writings.

There are two writers whose testimony, though preserved only in fragments, is yet put before us, by Eusebius, as of great value—*Hegesippus* and *Papias.*

Hegesippus (about 170 A.D.), is not said by Eusebius to have actually used our Gospels, but to have made *occasional use of the Gospel according to the Hebrews* (ἐκ τὲ τοῦ καθ' Ἑβραίους εὐαγγέλιου—τινα τίθησιν, "Hist. Eccl.," iii.), which implies that he added to the use of our Gospels the subsidiary use of another. Dr. Lightfoot has shown that Eusebius, in *not* mentioning the Gospels, as the chief source, does not ignore them. His silence is eloquent. He takes for granted the knowledge of the authorized Gospels. Hegesippus makes allusion to the

slaughter of the innocents. That is not found in the Gospel to the Hebrews. Several of the fragments preserved plainly point to his knowledge of Matthew and Luke, and he employs the term "*sacred writings*," evidently of the Gospels, such a term never being used of an apocryphal Gospel. He speaks of himself in such a manner that we cannot doubt his orthodoxy, and his position, as acknowledged by such churches as those of Corinth and Rome. He could not quote false Gospels to such churches.

But, while the evidence of Hegesippus is of value, it is surpassed by that of *Papias*. He was bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, about 120 A.D., and is said to have been martyred under M. Aurelius, about the same time as Polycarp, 165–167 A.D. His congregation was in close connection with the churches of Judæa. The title of his work, to which Eusebius refers, is "An Exposition of Oracles of the Lord, based upon Teaching of the Elders" ("Hist. Eccl.," iii. 39). His object was to explain some of Christ's sayings, not to give a Gospel of his own. From this book Eusebius extracted, what seemed to him, "memorable" statements, respecting our Gospels, especially Matthew and Mark. His words are these: "Matthew," Papias said, "wrote the oracles (τὰ λογία) in the Hebrew tongue, and every one interpreted them as he was able. Mark, as the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately, though not in order, all that he remembered that was said or done by Christ. For he neither heard the Lord, nor attended upon Him, but later, as I said, upon Peter, who taught according to the occasion, and not as composing a connected narrative of the Lord's discourses; so that Mark made no mistake in writing down some things as he remembered them, for he took care of one thing, not to omit any of the particulars that he heard, or to falsify any part of them" ("Hist. Eccl.," iii. 24). The main argument from this statement is this, that there was an original Hebrew, or Aramaic, Matthew, and that there was a Greek version even in the time of Papias, so that our Greek Matthew may correspond with that early translation, and that Mark put down the substance of Peter's

oral Gospel given in his preaching. The objection is, that Mark, as we have it, is *in order*, and that Matthew, as we have it, is not, according to Papias, the original Gospel of Matthew. But even if it be admitted that our Mark and Matthew are not exact reproductions of the original autographs, the question may be put, will the language of Papias apply to some earlier and more primary state of the Gospels, to documents *incorporated* in the works come down to us? Papias uses the word λογία, not gospels, but oracles or discourses. This is probably the explanation of the representation given by him. "Papias is repeating what he heard from the presbyter John, which would seem to take us up to the very fountain head of evangelical composition. But such a statement does not preclude the possibility of subsequent changes in the documents to which he refers."[1] He confirms the existence of a Matthew and a Mark, substantially the same as ours. It devolves upon opponents to explain his words of other documents, which could be substituted for ours as more authoritative.

We now pass on to consider the evidence of the *Clementines*, sprung from and representing the philosophical Ebionites. The *Clementine Homilies* were written about 160 A.D., and were attributed to Clemens Romanus, but without doubt falsely so. The *Clementine Recognitions*, a kind of Christian romance, are only extant in a Latin translation by Rufinus, and as the quotations made in them have plainly been accommodated by the translator to the canonical Gospels, their evidence is not of value; but that of the *Homilies* is much to the point. The date of the *Clementine Homilies* cannot be absolutely determined. The highest critical authorities place it in the middle of the second century. The quotations found in this work differ but little from our Gospels. Few are exact. Some apocryphal words and details are added. Either the author used our Gospels, or some later documents which presuppose their existence. "The facts do not permit us to claim *the exclusive* use of the canonical Gospels; but that they were used, mediately

[1] Sanday.

or immediately, and to a greater or less degree, is beyond question."[1]

Passing by the evidence to be derived from heretical writers, such as *Valentinus* and *Basilides*, of the Gnostic school, fragments of whose writings are preserved by *Epiphanius*, *Hippolytus*, *Eusebius*, *Origen*, and others, and who are said by *Tertullian* to have used our Gospels, we now come to what is perhaps the most striking evidence of all, that of—

Marcion. Son of a bishop of Sinope, Marcion flourished A.D. 120–170. Being a declared enemy of the Judaistic party in the Church, he made it his object to cast out all Jewish elements from the Christian faith, and restore the gospel of St. Paul to its original simplicity. With this view, not only did he reject the Old Testament, and those parts of the New which seemed to him Jewish in spirit, but he attempted to put together a Bible of his own, that is, he collected the sacred books of the Christian Church into two volumes, "The Gospel," and "The Apostolicon," or writings of the apostle. The former is supposed to have been an adaptation of the Gospel of Luke. The latter is a collection of the Epistles of Paul, excluding the Pastoral Epistles and Hebrews. Justin says (A.D. 147): "Marcion has, in every nation of men, caused many to blaspheme." From allusions in various writers, Irenæus, Tertullian, Epiphanius, and others, we gather that Marcion settled in Rome, and commenced his teaching there A.D. 139–142 (according to Tischendorf, 130 A.D.), so that his testimony is certainly to be dated before the middle of the second century. There is a correspondence between what we can collect of his gospel and our Luke, and the question therefore is, did Marcion use and mutilate our third Gospel, or did St. Luke, or whoever wrote the third Gospel, add to and supersede his? If the latter be the truth, then our third Gospel dates after the middle of the second century, and is not authentic. If the former, then Marcion confirms our Gospel by his use of it. We have, it is true, only statements of Christian writers, such as Tertullian

[1] Sanday.

and Epiphanius, on which to build, but so many are the quotations and references, that we can reconstruct Marcion's gospel with considerable certainty. We find, then, that so great is the similarity between Marcion's gospel and our Luke, that the only distinction is in length; Marcion's is an abridgment of Luke's, or Luke's an amplification of Marcion's. Which had the priority? Undoubtedly Luke's, for (i.) the Fathers charge Marcion with mutilating Luke. It can be proved that he altered and mutilated the Epistles for his purposes, and we may presume he would do the same with the Gospel. (ii.) The German critical school, Volkmar, Hilgenfeld, Ritschl, and Baur, have maintained, with immense learning, that it is more likely that, for dogmatic purposes, Marcion mutilated Luke, than that Judaistic writers, or copyists, should have added to Marcion. Marcion denied the human birth of Jesus Christ, and disparaged the ministry of John the Baptist, and such views correspond with his omissions. (iii.) The literary argument is immensely strong, from the use of words and the prevailing style. Marcion has omitted a total of 309 verses. In these verses there are 111 distinct peculiarities of Luke's style, in 185 separate instances, and 138 characteristic words in 224 instances; more, therefore, than one distinction to each verse, either of style or word. How could the part omitted have been the production of another hand? (iv.) If Marcion used Luke, then Luke's Gospel must have been already some time before the world. Now Marcion's *readings* of Luke have some of them, it has been said, a better and more original value than our present text. But the bulk of his differences from the best MSS. show that he must have followed divergent MSS., that his gospel, instead of being itself an original document, was really corrupted. Therefore the *original* Gospel of Luke, from which he formed his *mutilated* gospel, must have been produced a considerable time before he wrote; in fact, in 140 A.D. appears a gospel in an advanced stage of transcription. Allowing a reasonable time for the corruption, we get back to the first century. (v.) Marcion is scarcely likely to have

originated the idea of a collection of sacred books. Similar collections probably existed previously. They may have differed from one another, and been used only in particular districts, but they were due to the previous publication of the separate books. If, therefore, in 140 A.D., Marcion trod in the footsteps of others in forming a collection of sacred books, we must allow a single generation for the practice to have prevailed, which again brings us close up to the apostolic age.

Tatian was a Syrian teacher of rhetoric, converted by Justin Martyr, afterwards an Encratite Gnostic (about A.D. 150). Eusebius says concerning him ("Hist. Eccl.," iv. 29): "Tatian, however, put together, *I know not how* (οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως), a sort of patchwork or combination of the four Gospels, and called it *The Diatessaron*, which is still current with some." The expression here used is idiomatic, and means that the harmony was a curious sort of thing, difficult to describe. Some have argued, notably the author of "Supernatural Religion," that Eusebius had never seen Tatian's book, but this is not warranted by the language. *Epiphanius* ("Hær.," 391, D.), speaks of the Diatessaron as called by some "*The Gospel according to the Hebrews*." *Theodoret* says that the work was much used by followers of the apostles, but removed from the churches by himself because it mutilated the Gospels. The question, therefore, is, what was this Diatessaron? Did Tatian put together *our* four Gospels, or any others? *Irenæus* speaks decisively of our four; Tatian lived at the same time, why then should not he? Plainly he used our fourth Gospel, John, for that he quotes, word for word. Possibly, he may have had before him a fifth Gospel, that "*according to the Hebrews*," which will explain his work being described, in the fifth century, by Victor of Capua, as "*The Diapente*," "*The Five Gospels*," and also the remark of Epiphanius. If a harmony of the four Gospels could be produced in A.D. 150, they must have been in existence long before that.

It is scarcely necessary to go further with the evidence. Fragments of the Gospels are found in other writers of the

second century, such as *Dionysius of Corinth*, *Melito of Sardis*, *Claudius Apollinaris*, bishop of Hierapolis (176–180 A.D.). *Athenagoras* wrote an apology for the Christians, to Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, about 177 A.D., referring distinctly to the Gospels, especially to the Sermon on the Mount. The well-known *Letter from the churches of Vienne and Lyons*, describing their persecution, 177 A.D., contains several quotations from the New Testament, and among them one that is plainly from Luke's Gospel (i. 6). There are also very distinct references to our Gospels in the writings of *Ptolemæus* and *Heracleon*, the Gnostics, referred to as followers of Valentinus, by Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, and who probably wrote not later than A.D. 160.

Passing by these, we adduce, as our last testimony, the very remarkable case of *Celsus*. Celsus was a heathen philosopher, the date of whose birth it is impossible to determine. In 248 A.D., Origen wrote a work against him, in reply to attacks which he had made upon Christianity. In this book ("Origen against *Celsus*"), Celsus is spoken of as though he had written some time before. His work, "*The Word of Truth*," had already obtained considerable circulation, and it was only by the persuasion of his friend Ambrosius, that Origen undertook to reply to it. He knew so little about Celsus that he only conjectured that he was an Epicurean, of the time of Hadrian, whereas, in fact, he was a Platonist. There was *a* Celsus, a friend of Lucian, who lived under M. Aurelius and Commodus, and therefore about the middle of the second century. Dr. Keim, a German critic of the rationalistic school, has examined the question with great learning, and reaches the conclusion that Celsus published "The Word of Truth," in A.D. 178, some say it was A.D. 158. Now the work of Celsus, which is referred to largely by Origen, proves beyond doubt that he was quite familiar with our Gospels. Therefore, we are quite sure that they existed in 178 A.D. This date brings us to the time of the catalogues and the Muratorian Fragment before referred to, in fact to the time of the canon. So that

the evidence is complete. About A.D. 175, there is no longer any obscurity as to the use of the present Gospels, in all the principal Christian churches. And it has been shown, that we can go back, from the year 175 A.D., to the beginning of the second century, and the age of the last apostle, which virtually carries us to the supposed date of the Gospels themselves, for if they were in existence at the end of the first century, it is impossible that they could have been written by any others than apostles and apostolically guided men.

We shall now, as briefly as possible, describe the argument for the fourth Gospel. The controversy over this document has been of the most prolonged and determined character, but the attacks upon the Johannine authorship have been met with so much learning, especially during the last quarter of a century, that the question can scarcely now be regarded as open. The labours of Godet, Lücke, Luthardt, Ebrard, Beyschlag, and especially of Canon Westcott (see his very able Introduction to John in the "Speaker's Commentary"), have placed the difficulties of the question in so clear a light, that the acceptance or rejection of the Gospel is really henceforth more a matter to be decided by a sense of the internal worth of the contents, than by the external evidence. The external evidence for the authenticity of St. John's Gospel, need not be traced farther than A.D. 175. After that time it was universally acknowledged. Looking first to the Gospel itself, we find, in the concluding chapter, a reference to peculiar relations existing between St. John and the presbyters of the Church of Asia (xxi. 24). It is supposed that Irenæus refers to this fact, when he says, quoting John xiv. 2, ὡς οἱ πρεσβύτεροι λέγουσι ("Adv. Hær.," v. 36, 2). This is also intimated by others of the *Fathers*. If this were the case, the Gospel was given to the world, under the joint authority of the apostle and elders of the Church, which, as it was the last of the Gospels, and in some degree supplemented and corrected the others, would be a very natural and likely method of securing its reception. Irenæus was born at Smyrna, 140 A.D., and he speaks of the

apostle John as living in the time of Trajan (98 A.D. to 117 A.D); if, therefore, the Gospel was written by him, it would be published about the end of the century, and may have followed in date the Epistle of Clement (1 Cor.). There are apparent, though not very clear, references to it, in the apostolical Fathers *Barnabas*, *Hermas*, and *Ignatius*. Polycarp, in his Epistle to the Philippians, has a parallel passage to 1 John iv. 2, 3: "Every spirit which confesseth," etc. It is universally granted that the First Epistle of John and the Gospel are by the same hand. *Papias* is said, by Eusebius, to have used the First Epistle of John, about the middle of the second century. But the first very decided evidence, in favour of the fourth Gospel, is that of *Justin Martyr* (A.D. 120–170), and it is so decided that it seems almost conclusive. In the first place, we find in Justin the doctrine of the Logos, which certainly did not appear, in the Johannine form of it, previous to the first century. Justin was not likely, himself, to reduce the Alexandrian philosophy to a Christian expression. It may be said to have been somewhat anticipated, in Proverbs viii., and in the Apocrypha, but not in the form in which it appears in John, where it is distinctly identified with Jesus Christ: "The Logos was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (i. 14). Next, we find the important passage John iii. 3–5, on regeneration, indisputably referred to by Justin, the reference being all the more striking, inasmuch as the words themselves are not quoted. Again, we have in Justin, quotations from the Old Testament, which vary from the LXX., but coincide with John. In twenty-eight instances, the references are traceable, more or less distinctly. In "Dial. ag. Try.," § 81; "Apol.," I. 61–5; "Dial. Try.," § 47; "Apol.," I. 66; "Dial. Try.," § 106; "Apol.," I. 35; and "Dial. Try.," § 97, are instances, which, every candid reader must allow, presuppose Justin's acquaintance with John. Keim, the rationalistic critic, acknowledges that the evidence is sufficient. Indeed, the whole tone of the writings of Justin, and his constant use of such words as Light, Word, Living Water, Son of God, and others peculiar to John, will

allow of no other conclusion, except indeed it be maintained, which it can scarcely be, seriously, that Justin himself was the author of the Gospel. In that case, we are met with the difficulty, that there is evidence to show that John's Gospel was in existence before 150 A.D., when Justin wrote. *The Clementine Homilies* (about 160 A.D.), re-edited in 1853 with additions, are admitted by Hilgenfeld, Volkmar, and other critics, to have references to John, as in the case of the conversation with Nicodemus (ch. iii.), and the healing of the man born blind (ch. ix.). *Basilides*, the Gnostic, began to teach about A.D. 125. He refers to the Gospel, in what Dr. Sanday considers an undoubted quotation. *The Valentinians* are said by Irenæus and Hippolytus to have used the Gospel. *Ptolemæus* and *Heracleon* both quote from it, and the latter even wrote a commentary on it. This carries us to 165 A.D., and to 178 A.D. From the year 170 A.D. the evidence becomes widespread and abundant. *Apollinaris*, *Tatian*, *The Epistle of Vienne and Lyons*, *Celsus*, *The Muratorian Fragment*, *Theophilus of Antioch*, and *Irenæus*, may all be adduced. Dr. Westcott says, "The chain of evidence is complete and continuous. Not one historical doubt is raised from any quarter, and the lines of evidence converge towards the point where the Gospel was written, and from which it was delivered to the churches."[1] On the other side, it has been alleged that there was a sect—the Alogi—who denied the Johannine authorship, and, according to Epiphanius ("Hær.," v. 3.), attributed it to Cerinthus. But this was on account of their opposition to the doctrine of the Logos, which they rejected, whence their name.

When we turn from the external evidence, to that which has been made the battle-ground of hottest controversy, the evidence from the character and contents of the book itself, we are met with the objection, which is very boldly advanced in modern times, that the style, and the generally profound, philosophical character of the thought, cannot be reconciled with the position

[1] "Bible in the Church;" see Alford's New Testament, vol. i., Prolegomena, and "Speaker's Commentary": "John."

and known peculiarities of the apostle John. *Baur* of Tübingen has chiefly elaborated this argument, on the negative side. The prologue (i. 1–14) is said to be entirely Alexandrian, the idea of the Logos being borrowed from Philo. The discrepancies with the Synoptics are said to be so great as to exclude an apostolic origin. The omission of such miracles as the healing of the man born blind (ch. ix.), and the raising of Lazarus, from the other Gospels, is said to be fatal to its authority, and the allusions to the sacraments (in ch. iii., vi.) evidences of its later date. There are many peculiarities of style, such as the "Verily, verily, I say unto you," the parallelism of arrangement occasionally observed, the general philosophical cast of thought and profundity of language; all said to be indications of a non-apostolic origin. But who is to judge of these things? Who can know what influences had been brought to bear on St. John's mind, during his long residence in Asia Minor, and especially after the deaths of St. Peter and St. Paul? Might we not well suppose, that he would make a supreme effort to meet the far deeper and more intellectual requirements of the age in which he lived, and that he who could write the First Epistle and the Apocalypse, could write the Gospel? And may we not fairly demand a proof that the early Church regarded the work as at all inconsistent with the traditional character of the apostle? All these objections, from the contents, have been ably canvassed and answered by *Luthardt*, "On the Gospel of John;" *Beyschlag* (see art. in *Contemporary Review* for October and November, 1877: "The Gospel of John and Modern Criticism"); Westcott, Smith's Dictionary: "New Testament Canon:" "Speaker's Commentary," etc.; Godet, and many others. There is one challenge which the apologist may make to the objectors, which never has been, and never can be, met —name the ecclesiastical writer of the first half of the second century to whom the book can be attributed. The suggestion of Justin Martyr is simply absurd. He could not have written it. Had he done so, he would have been an impostor. The Church would have exposed his deceit. That the idea of the

Logos is the product of a later age, is a mere assumption. Gnosticism was substantially present in the thought of the age, and the influence of Philo may be very reasonably supposed to have reached Ephesus. A great revolution had passed over the Eastern world, in the destruction of Jerusalem, and in the spread of Christianity. The period intervening between 70 A.D. and 95 A.D. was one of change, perplexity, shaking of nations, deepening of thought. Tacitus describes it as a time when "præter multiplices rerum humanarum casus, cœlo terrâque prodigia et fulminum monitus et futurorum præsagia" ("Hist.," i. 3; *cf.* Luke xxi. 25, 26). The writings of the apostle Paul were already stirring up intellectual curiosity. The wants of humanity demanded a deep and full satisfaction, in the revelations of Christianity. The sound of the gospel had been heard in the chief seats of human philosophy, in Alexandria by the disciples of Philo, in Hierapolis by the followers of Epictetus. As it was at Athens, when the Apostle of the Gentiles visited it, so it was at Ephesus, when the apostle John laboured there, tarrying till the Lord came; many were asking for some new thing. Influences surrounded the last apostle, arising out of the school of Plato, and from the heretic Cerinthus, already formulated in direct opposition to the truth. Antichrist was already in the world. "The prophecies which ushered in the new dispensation failed; the tongues which gave utterance to the raptures of the first believers ceased; the knowledge of the early Church vanished before the fuller development of Christianity; but love still remained, and at Ephesus, which combined the refinements of Greek culture with the freedom of Eastern thought, St. John wrote the gospel of the world, resolving reason into intuition and faith into sight."[1]

The limits of this work will not allow us to pursue further this examination of the evidence for the canonicity of the Gospels. Our rapid review leaves on the mind this conviction. The evidence is cumulative, rather than positive and

[1] Westcott "On the Canon."

direct. It is gathered from many authors, and is such as might be expected from those who wrote when the more intellectual forms of Christianity were but little developed, and when the idea of an ecclesiastical canon of Scripture was scarcely in the mind of the Church. The argument might be fairly left at this point; for if the documents of Christianity are genuine and authentic, it is enough to refer to the whole history of the gospel since it came into the world, to vindicate the position of believers when they simply follow the records as true. From the days of the apostles until now, Christianity has meant, not what philosophers and critics have assumed it to mean, but what has flowed naturally and irresistibly from the sacred books. It is indisputable, that the early Church accepted the records of the Scriptures; and reflected their teaching in fact. The triumphs of Christianity could not have been effected unless the Scriptures had been simply, and openly, and fully accepted. Take from history the New Testament, as it is, and substitute for it a mere remnant or heap of *disjecta membra*, a vague doctrine of morality, such as the sceptical school would fain prove sufficient, and then the phenomena of primitive Christianity are entirely inexplicable.

III. *The attempt of the critical school of Germany to overturn the authority of the New Testament canon.*

As it is the aim of this work to provide the student of Christian evidence with materials for the defence of Christianity, against attacks actually made upon it, it seems necessary to describe the positions which have been assumed by "*modern criticism*;" although it ought to be stated, at the outset, that those positions have been so vigorously examined by the scholarly apologists of the last thirty years, that they can be retained only by an audacious repetition of exploded fallacies and disguise of manifest defeat. But it is characteristic of the whole army of doubters that they never know when their doubts have been really answered; and that if they are unable to repeat them *in the same form*, a slight variation serves to give them the appearance of novelty, not always detected as

"old foes with a new face." The dogmatism and assumption of *the modern critical school* are almost invariable characteristics of their writings. Dr. Pusey, in his able work on *Daniel*, has brought together a large number of instances in which the hollowness of their criticism is seen, and in which their contradictions among themselves show the insecurity of their main positions. The attacks upon the authority of the New Testament have utterly failed. They have been generally based upon *à priori* prejudgments, or criticisms of style and matter. They are now beginning to be regarded as a spent force, which has been aimed against the solid wall of Christianity, but has left the structure substantially uninjured.

Another preliminary point to be remembered, is the close connection between all the criticism of the modern school and a certain specific development of philosophy, which, beginning with Kant, culminated in the extreme idealism of Hegel, a system of pantheistic thought, which bases itself on the identification of subject and object in the unity of consciousness, and which reduces the conception of a Divine Personality to the mere law of the human mind itself, a law which demands an infinite object as well as the sense of infinity in itself. There may be attempts, such as that recently made by Principal Caird, in his "Philosophy of Religion," to adapt such a philosophy to the doctrines of Christianity; but it is a mere dissipation of solid fact into airy speculation, revolting to common sense. From the first, the underlying principle, in all rationalistic criticism of the evangelical records, has been the impossibility of accepting the supernatural, *as fact*. It must be regarded as *the natural*, seen through the haze of the human mind, at a certain stage of its development towards scientific thought. In other words, it is relegated from the world of reality to the world of ideas. At all costs, the miraculous, as commonly understood, must be eliminated. The first attacks, made by the coarse infidelity of the eighteenth century, on the moral character of Jesus and of His disciples, as by Reimarus, in the "Wolfenbüttel Frag-

ments," in the middle of the century, and by some of the English Deists, followed by the French encyclopædists and writers like Voltaire, were so clumsy and barbarous, that they no longer suited the more scientific spirit of the nineteenth century. They were entirely discarded. The next step was to suggest that, instead of intentional *fraud* in the writers, a mixture of causes operated; in some cases, ignorance and enthusiasm working upon natural phenomena; in others, a few original facts exaggerated by a legendary process, as they passed from lip to lip by oral tradition, eventually taking the form in which they are now found in the Gospels. The old Rationalists, headed by *Paulus*, rendered themselves a laughing-stock, by their foolish attempts at naturalistic explanations of miraculous narratives. Schleiermacher may be said to have given them the *coup de grace*. Their writings are now out of date and altogether superseded. But in the *Tübingen school* we meet with much more formidable opponents, men of scholarly minds, philosophical acumen, and generally cautious, scientific method of research. Notwithstanding their utter failure to substitute for the Christian faith any consistent theory, explaining the origin and success of Christianity and the nature of the New Testament writings, they have yet, by their attentive study of the facts of early Christian history, and of the New Testament itself, added some valuable new lights for the better understanding of the first two centuries. It will be sufficient if we give in this chapter some account of the labours of *Strauss* and *Schenkel*, in their attempts to substantiate the *mythical theory*; passing then to those of *Baur*, in his attempt to prove that the New Testament, and the development of Christian history, were natural products of existing moral forces in the world; and concluding with some notice of the French critic, *M. Ernest Renan*, who has followed in their wake, though pursuing somewhat of an independent course.

1. *The Mythical Theory.* The two names which have become most identified with this theory are those of *Strauss* and

Schenkel. The latter, a professor at Heidelberg, although not so much known as the great Tübingen professor, contributed to give currency to the mythical theory. He made use of two principles in order to dispense with the miraculous. (1) The enthusiastic spirit of the Lord's disciples, leading them to exaggerate all that they heard of Him. (2) The general legendary tendency of the age. Some of the miracles, he thinks, can be explained by laws of psychology, as "the influence of a personality gifted with the highest spiritual talents and the rarest moral powers, met by an unqualified confidence on the part of those who sought help from Him." Others are represented in the Gospels as "the works of absolute Omnipotence, in which all the laws of Nature are suspended, such as quieting the storm, feeding the multitude, raising the dead, and the like." These latter miracles he rejects, attributing the narratives to the "unconscious worship of an enthusiastic religious fancy, proceeding from the deeply-excited consciences and hearts of the first disciples and churches, which thus gave a hyperbolical expression to the glow of their pious feelings and to their admiration, love, and reverence for the departed hero, an expression which, naturally enough, was scarcely in accordance with the standard of sober historical criticism."[1] In order to carry out this view, he unites all the methods of explanation which had been suggested by the Rationalists, natural, mythical, allegorical, sentimental, or prosaic.[2] In all these attempts to explain the Gospels without miracles, it is assumed that Jesus Christ was gradually led to deem Himself the Messiah by the influence of the popular ideas about Him, by the reflection of His own character in the mirror of the people's thoughts and words. *Keim* himself, in his "Jesus of Nazara," rejects such a view as untenable.

David Frederick Strauss, was a young lecturer in theology at Tübingen, and an enthusiastic disciple of Hegel's philosophy.

[1] Schenkel's "Sketch of the Life of Jesus," pp. 15, 16.

[2] See a full account of his work in Christlieb's "Modern Doubt and Christian Belief" (Clark's Foreign Theological Library, 1875).

He published his first edition of his "*Leben Jesu*" (Life of Jesus) in 1835. Marked by great acuteness, learning, patience of research, modesty, and an exquisite refinement of style, it produced an immense excitement in European thought. Although the fundamental conception of the book had been long before the world, it had never been wrought out with so much elaborate care and thoroughness. The disciples of Jesus, says Strauss, were influenced by the love of the marvellous characteristic of an unscientific age, by Jewish conceptions of the Messiah, by the necessity of reconciling the facts of Christ's history with the demands of the time for the signs of power and victory in the Founder of Christianity, and by the general obscurity which had gathered round the history by the lapse of a century; for it is assumed that the Gospels were written after the last apostle was gone, about 130–150 A.D. The sources of the legends, which are supposed to have grown up round the few facts of history, are—(1) Old Testament miracles, (2) Messianic hopes, (3) analogous heathen fables. These legends were supposed, at first, to have been unintentional. Finding, however, that this position could not be maintained, it was then suggested that there was a mixture of the legend with fraudulent fiction. This is put forth as an elevation of the popular product, to the higher sphere of the ideal and universal. "The supernatural birth of Christ, His miracles, His resurrection and ascension, remain," said Strauss, "eternal truths, whatever doubts may be cast on their reality as historical facts."

The first edition of the "*Leben Jesu*" was addressed to the learned class, and drew forth a very large number of replies, by Steudel, Tholuck, Neander, Ullmann, Dorner, Ebrard, Lange, and others. Finding that his theory was not accepted by scholars, Strauss boldly threw himself on popular sympathy, publishing an edition in 1864, "*For the German people.*" In the preface to this edition, he announced that the effect of his work would be "to do away with parsons in the Church, and therefore to do away, first, with miracles in religion." How it

succeeded, may perhaps be judged by the issue in Strauss's own mental history. Shortly before his death he published, October, 1872, his latest work, "*The Old and the New Faith: A Confession.*" In this, his maturest thoughts are given upon two questions: "Are we still Christians? Have we any religion?" One of his biographers and followers, Zeller, sums up the result in the following words: "The first of these questions is simply to be answered in the negative; and the second, on the other hand, it is true, generally speaking, to receive an affirmative reply; but nevertheless only so far as the name of religion is not refused to the feeling of an absolute dependence, and to that which arises from it, submission to the course of the world, inner freedom and joyfulness of mind; when that feeling, as in Schleiermacher, refers to the greatness, perfection, legality, and rationality of the system of the world, instead of a personal God."[1] So that the result is, in fact, a pantheistic fatalism and quietism, which has no other form of expression than a vague feeling of dependence on the laws of the universe.

It is well, however, notwithstanding this practical conviction of the worthlessness of the theory, to state it more fully, as it is still applied by some to the gospel records. "We distinguish," says Strauss, "by the name *Evangelical Mythus*, a narrative relating directly or indirectly to Jesus, which may be considered, not as the expression of a *fact*, but as the product of an idea, of His earliest followers; such a narrative being mythical in proportion as it exhibits this character. The mythus, in this sense of the term, meets us, in the gospel as elsewhere, sometimes in its *pure* form, constituting the substance of the narrative, and sometimes as an accidental adjunct to the actual history." The *Pure Mythus* he traces to two sources—(i.) the Messianic ideas and expectations; (ii.) the particular impressions left by the personal character, actions, and fate of Jesus, modifying the Messianic idea in the minds of the people. *The Historical Mythus* has for its groundwork a definite individual *fact*,

[1] Zeller's "Life of Strauss."

seized upon by religious enthusiasm, turned about with mythical conceptions; such, *e.g.*, as the saying of Jesus, "I will make you fishers of men," to which, the idea of the Christ being added, produced the narrative of the miraculous draught of fishes; or the fact of the baptism is heightened, by the same conception of the Messiah, into the mythical account in the Gospel. The idea, the fact, the legend, all are sources from which the narrative borrows its form, and beyond these there is a *literary* element, due entirely to the author of the Gospel, purely individual, designed merely to give clearness, connection, and climax to the representation. As a mere abstract theory, there would seem at first sight to be some show of reason in this ingenious explanation of the narratives; but such a product of a philosophical mind must be tested by a close application of the principles suggested to the words of the Gospel, and here there is an utter failure. This will be evident from the fact that Strauss himself, in the second edition of his work, was compelled to renounce his first position, that the mythical element was an unconscious product of tendencies existing in the minds of the disciples; he confesses that he "has to use the supposition of unconscious and intentional invention." Moreover, the portrait of Jesus thus produced is utterly inconsistent and unnatural. A mere heap of fragments is the result. The body is dissected minutely, but the remains are the repulsive refuse of a morbid anatomy, not the representation of a living person. The real impelling motive to this treatment of the Gospels is put at the very threshold of the work, and explains the whole. "We know for certain that there was nothing supernatural in Christ." This is the assumption of dogmatic certainty, unworthy of all scientific investigation. Schwegler has well said, "The attempt to solve historical problems by means of philosophical categories must always fail; Strauss has sullied the purity of historical research by importing into the critique of the Gospels his presupposition as to the impossibility of the miraculous, under the guise of a philosophical postulate." The Old Testament ideas certainly influenced

both Christ and His disciples; but because there is a correspondence between such ideas and the facts, are the facts to be judged as a mere offspring of the ideas? Why not rather say, the same God revealed Himself in Old Testament facts and in New Testament facts? "Why," asks Dr. Christlieb, "should not God be able to carry on His kingdom towards its consummation in a kind of rhythmic, historical movement, in which certain events, happening at different times and under different laws, should yet distinctly correspond?"[1] Moreover, the one necessary postulate of Strauss's theory is the late origin of the Gospels, and the length of time therefore intervening between the facts and the fictions springing from them. Not only is it untrue that the Jews, at the time of Christ, were at all like the heathen, in their love of the marvellous and readiness to invent myths, *i.e.*, in a prehistoric state, but there is not sufficient time, in the half-century which elapsed, for such obscurity to gather about the facts. We could not conceive myths and fables originating in the Greek mind, at the time of Aristotle and Plato; and we know that the time of our Lord's advent was even more critical, and sceptical, than the time of the Greek philosophers. There was a lively historical and literary spirit everywhere at work. Myths generally bear the character of the place where they were originated, but the character and history of Jesus are not, as described, intensely Jewish. The Gospels, moreover, are historically and chronologically composed. They appear as narratives, not as myths, and their very discrepancies are arguments for their simple and straightforward truthfulness. Take the two great instances of mythical narratives, the Homeric poems and the legendary story of early Rome: are they at all to be compared with the Gospels? Was there not a considerable interval, even of centuries, between the events described and the poetic and mythical description of them?

And then, lastly, we set against such a theory the fact that Christianity was from the first hated and opposed, that such

[1] Lect. vi.

men as Celsus and Porphyry, to say nothing of the Jews themselves, and many learned heathen, who, though they wrote nothing which has come down to us, would have done so had they seen the opportunity, know absolutely nothing of such a theory. "How could the Jews have remained unbelieving," asks Strauss, "had the miracles really occurred?" Because, we reply, they were morally perverse, like modern sceptics. "Were not the early Christians likely to invent such stories?" On the contrary, while, as we see in apocryphal gospels, many mythical and legendary narratives were in circulation, they were never mingled, by the true Church, with the gospel. "Strauss shares the fate of all anti-miraculists. Denying miracles, they are found to substitute still greater enigmas for them, and yet are unable to explain real history. There stands Christ in the unique consciousness of His Godhead, His redeeming vocation, and His universal Kingship. There is the Church; there is Christianity with its world-regenerating effects—all undeniable facts. All these Strauss cannot explain by referring them to one who was not free from sin and error, or the inventive, aye, *deceptive*, imagination of His followers. Here we see the immense residuum, which even Strauss cannot get rid of, and which shows his whole hypothesis to be insufficient and wrong. It is the old trick which Hegel tried to play, treating the world as posited by the '*absolute idea*,' whilst the absolute idea is only realized in the world."[1]

2. *The critical labours of Baur and the Tübingen school.* We now pass away from the mythical theory, which was proved to be scientifically unsatisfactory by the attempt of Strauss to give it a complete exposition, in view of the facts. A very different attempt was made by Dr. Ferdinand Christian von Baur, (died December 2nd, 1860), professor of theology at Tübingen, of whom Strauss was a younger pupil, to explain the origin and success of Christianity without the admission of the miraculous, and in connection with acknowledged natural and

[1] Christlieb, Lect. vi.

historical facts. The chief work of Baur, in which his principles are set forth, is that entitled, "Das Christenthum der ersten drei Jahrhunderte" ("The Christianity of the First Three Centuries").[1] He began to publish his views in 1831, in the *Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie.* Since that time he has written on "Manichæanism" (1831), on "Gnosticism" (1835), on the "History of the Doctrine of the Atonement" (1838), on the "Trinity and Incarnation" (1841–3), on "St. Paul" (1845), and the work above mentioned (published in 1855). The following remarks of Dr. Schaff, on the spirit of Hegelianism, of which Baur's views are an application, will prepare the reader to judge of their character, as showing their philosophical origin:—"Hegelianism was, in a certain sense, a philosophy of restoration, in rigid antagonism to the revolutionary, self-sufficient illuminationism of the last century. To arbitrary self-will it opposed stern law; to private individual opinion, the general reason of the world and the public opinion of the State. It regarded history, not as the play of capricious chance, but as the product of the necessary, eternal laws of the spirit. Its maxim is, Everything reasonable is actual, and everything actual (all that *truly* exists) is reasonable. It sees, in all ages of history, the agency of higher powers; not, indeed, of the Holy Ghost in the biblical sense, yet of a rational world-spirit, which makes use of individual men for the accomplishment of its plans. Hegel acknowledges Christianity as the absolute religion, and ascribes to the ideas of the Incarnation and the Trinity, though in a view very different from that of the Church doctrine, a deep philosophical truth, carrying the idea of the Trinity into his view of the whole universe, the world of matter as well as of mind."[2]

The ability of Dr. Baur cannot be denied. Dr. Christlieb says of him: "He was one of the greatest, if not the greatest, theological scholar of this century. After the death of Neander, the most notable historian of the Church and her doctrines,

[1] Translated into English, and published by Cont. Trans. Soc.
[2] "History of the Apostolic Church," Introd., § 36, p. 108.

not only in Germany, but in the world; the most indefatigable of investigators, especially as regards the history of primitive Christianity, in the elucidation of which he has deserved well of theology. He stands head and shoulders above all other modern opponents of the miraculous." The aim of this Tübingen school in all their criticism and historical investigation is a dogmatic aim. They work upon a philosophical presupposition. The miraculous, as such, is impossible. The appearance of the miraculous is to be explained by a deeper view of the immanence of the Divine in Nature. "The elements of the Christian religion are derived, as much as possible, from conceptions and ideas already extant in Judaism and Heathenism, and by connecting them with these, as though they were the products of a natural development. The means by which he seeks to eliminate the miraculous is the demonstration of *historical analogies and points of contact*, between the pre-Christian and the Christian, view, of the world and of God."[1] Christianity is Judaism spiritualized. The better spirit of the Old Testament, as represented in the prophets, is preserved by Christ, and carried to its victory over the opposing Judaism of the age by St. Paul. "Baur arrives at the conclusion that the germs of a new creation lay dormant in the dissolution of the old world, and only needed to be centred in one focus, in order to raise the religious consciousness to the level of Christianity. Christianity, therefore, is only the natural unity of all these elements. It contains nothing which is not conditioned by a preceding series of causes and effects; nothing which had not long before been prepared in different ways; nothing which had not already been indicated, either as a result of rational thought, or as a need of the human heart, or as a requirement of the moral consciousness."[2] But, that these existing elements of a new religious growth "should converge, in one special point, and in this one special individual, this is the wonder in the origin of Christianity which no historical reflection can further analyse."[3]

[1] Christlieb. [2] "The Three First Centuries," p. 21. [3] Christlieb, p. 512.

The problem being to explain the development of a universal religion from the germ found in Judaism, Baur begins by rejecting the account given us by St. Luke as untrustworthy, because involving the supernatural. The differences between St. Paul and the earlier apostles are represented in the Acts as removed by Divine interposition, and both St. James and St. Peter are co-workers in the widening of the Jewish Church to admit the Gentiles. But, admitting the genuineness of the four Epistles, —Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians—the Tübingen school undertake to show, that there was an irreconcilable opposition between the teaching of St. Paul and that of the earlier apostles, that there was a deadly conflict between the two forms of Christianity—the Petrine and the Pauline—which ceased only by the victory of the larger view, brought about partly by the influence of St. Paul himself, and partly by the co-operation of great world-changes which were in operation at that time. The First Epistle to the Corinthians is appealed to as showing that there were parties very widely divided in the early Church—a Petrine and a Pauline party. The Epistle to the Galatians is said to prove that at one time the two apostles were in open conflict, that their respective followers were as much embittered against one another as Protestant and Roman Catholic in modern times. The Acts is said to have been written after the triumph of the Pauline doctrine, in order to prove that the two apostles were not really opposed to one another, and the tone of conciliation and compromise is said to be traceable throughout it. In order to sustain this strange theory, Baur is compelled to identify primitive Christianity with a Jewish-Christian sect, the Ebionites, a narrow party in the Christian Church, who retained the observance of the Jewish law, and rejected the miraculous birth of our Saviour, as well as His Divine Sonship. "The Jewish-Christian party was predominant as far down as the beginning of the second century; but before this, *another more free and universalist school had separated from it*, chiefly through the teaching and work of the apostle Paul. This body held Christianity to be the universal

religion, released itself from the bondage of the law, and directed its attention chiefly to the heathen. Hence it gradually became the more numerous, and later on, the dominant party. Amongst its members a *higher* conception of Christ, of His pre-existence, His unity with the Father, His Godhead, was gradually developed during the course of the second century."[1] The original suggestion of this theory is undoubtedly taken from the spurious writings ascribed to Clement of Rome, the Clementine Homilies and Recognitions, which proceeded from the Ebionites. It was the more careful study of these works, neglected until comparatively recent times, which lay at the root of the whole conception of a prolonged conflict between the Petrine and Pauline doctrines. The dispute between St. Peter and Simon Magus is supposed, and perhaps correctly, to represent the divergence between St. Peter and St. Paul. St. Paul is not mentioned by name, but his teaching is ignored, and St. Peter is put in his place, and made to be the true apostle of the Gentiles. The enemy of the apostles (ὁ ἐχθρὸς ἄνθρωπος) is intended to represent St. Paul, although the occurrences described took place before the time of his conversion. The references of the Epistle to the Galatians are worked into the story, the "withstanding of St. Peter to the face," and his being "*blamed*" by St. Paul. Simon Magus asserts that he saw the Lord *in vision*, and on that account is contrasted with St. Peter, who saw Him in the flesh. This is supposed by Baur to be the remains of the conflict between the narrower and larger Christianity. At the beginning of the third century the conflict is over, but there are still those remaining, in remote portions of the Church, who hate St. Paul, though compelled to conceal their hatred because they are in the minority. The Marcionites, on the other hand, were followers of St. Paul who, in the same antagonistic spirit, rejected the Old Testament, and formed a New Testament of their own, on the principle of excluding all the Judaistic elements. So that Baur would attempt to prove that the Christian Church was originally

[1] Christlieb.

Ebionite, and that St. Paul was the introducer of a new doctrine, which at first was bitterly opposed, but ultimately received, both sides of the controversy being absorbed into a catholic Church. On this strange and novel view of the early history and documents of Christianity, it is now scarcely necessary to dwell with any lengthy criticism, as it is refuted by the plainest testimony of fact, and can only be supported on the ground of supposed fraud in the writers of the New Testament.

The following remarks of an anonymous writer in the *Quarterly Review*,[1] remind us of the service rendered by such a theory in calling out a fuller investigation of the facts :—"It has often happened, that the progress of science has been greatly promoted by taking an hypothesis on trial; for the working it out and the testing it bring to light a number of facts which otherwise might not have been taken notice of. All that is necessary to prevent the hypothesis from doing mischief is that it should not be pertinaciously held to if it fails, if the original hypothesis require to be constantly patched up by new assumptions, and if it is necessary to ignore or deny a multitude of facts which refuse to reconcile themselves with the theory. One may thankfully acknowledge the service which the starting of Baur's theory has done to our knowledge of the New Testament. In days when the Divine element in Scripture was alone regarded, and when the human element was almost completely ignored, it is surprising what plain things were overlooked by most diligent students of the Bible. Believing, as they did, that the whole volume had but one Author, and that a text from any part might, in order to sustain a doctrine, be combined with a text from any other, when the human writer seemed to be speaking of quite a different subject, they thought that if a thing were in the Bible at all, it was quite immaterial what part it was in. So no attention was paid to what may be called the comparative study of the books of Scripture; we mean, the taking notice what things were said by one writer and not by another; and the disagreements between

[1] July, 1880 : "St. Paul and Renan."

different passages were only studied when they were so striking as to present a difficulty which called for explanation. If the ransacking of our New Testament books, for supposed proofs of Pauline and anti-Pauline tendency, has been pursued with much misdirected ingenuity, at least it has brought to light many things which had escaped the notice of men who thought themselves well acquainted with the New Testament."

That there is an element of truth in the theory cannot be denied. The mistake is in attributing too much effect to mere subordinate causes. Christianity was undoubtedly prepared for by Greek thought and Roman polity; but to ascribe its universal victory to such agencies is simply to ignore facts. Besides, instead of getting rid of the supernatural, Baur merely brings it in on a still more stupendous scale, for he supposes a power at work through all the preceding ages, and through all the life of man, which could be nothing short of the Divine. "What long since," he says, "in various ways was the goal of all rational efforts, and of necessity forced itself upon the consciousness of man, in its essential purport, at length found its natural expression in Christianity." So be it; but this natural expression must have been supernaturally anticipated and provided for. To ascribe so much to the agency of the one man, the apostle Paul, is to contradict his own plain statements—both in 1 Corinthians and Galatians—that he was taught by Divine revelation, and that he determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Moreover, Baur is compelled to reject all the Epistles of St. Paul which make no reference to any antagonism with St. Peter, and therefore to ascribe them to deliberate forgery, which is absolutely inconsistent with the internal evidence. The First Epistle of Peter is rejected, because it is said to be too Pauline in tone. The Acts is a work written with an intention to deceive. The facts are misrepresented, and the discourses are invented by the writer! And further, it is entirely ignored that the difference between the two apostles at Antioch was not a theoretical but a practical one, and that the three apostles —Peter, James, and John (see Gal. ii. 9) perceived the grace

that was given to Paul, and gave to him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, "*that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.*"

"The Tübingen theory demands that equal havoc should be wrought among the remains of uninspired Christian antiquity. Clement of Rome, whose epistle, all sound writers are now agreed, dates from before the end of the first century, had completely outlived all Pauline and anti-Pauline disputes. With him both apostles have equal honours, and he shows no suspicion that they had ever been at variance. The same is to be said of the epistles of Ignatius; but it is not merely in the interests of this controversy that these letters have been rejected. Hermas shows not the least knowledge of any disputes as to the obligation of Gentiles to observe the Mosaic law. A book, called the 'Preaching of Peter,' was extant before the end of the second century; and we know, from the quotations of Clement of Alexandria, that this was undoubtedly anti-Jewish. It must, therefore, be piously believed that there was an early 'Preaching of Peter' which was anti-Pauline. The extant 'Acts of Peter and Paul'—undoubtedly very early—represent both apostles as harmoniously resisting Simon Magus at Rome. That faith in the unseen, which the reception of this theory demands, requires us to own the existence of an earlier narrative of the Roman sojournings of St. Peter, in which he must have encountered single-handed the magician in whom those in the secret would recognise St. Paul."

Thus, as Dr. Christlieb has shown with abundant evidence, "*the fundamental views of Baur entirely confuse and overturn the history of primitive Christianity and its records.* Having rejected the miraculous beginning of Christianity for the sake of his philosophical presuppositions, Baur is fated constantly to see his 'purely historical commencement' melt away beneath his touch. It is *a beginning without a beginning*, everything is already extant. Principles of thought which already exist are concentrated in Christ. He only introduces them into the consciousness of men, as the principle of a purely spiritual and

moral religion. But by mixing up this principle with the Messianic idea, he brings about His death, and with this the first beginning has failed. The essential germ of Christianity is no longer developed in connection with its Founder. Now, Christianity has need of a new historical beginning, and this is furnished by the belief of the disciples in the *resurrection*, *i.e.*, not by a fact, but merely by the notion of a fact. But since the disciples confine themselves to the exclusive national element of Christ's consciousness, *this* beginning also threatens to subside in the sand; Christianity is mere *Ebionitism*, and remains essentially on the Judaistic standpoint. At length the real beginning of Christianity appears in St. Paul, who, in the involuntary impulse of his dialectic consciousness, gains the day in favour of Christian universalism. But this truly Christian Pauline beginning is in danger of perishing through Petrine opposition. Happily there appears (or rather does not appear), in the middle of the second century, the author of the Fourth Gospel, '*the great nameless one*,' with his free 'composition guided only by the idea,' but not in the least historical. Here, at last, is the final beginning, after which we cannot conceive any other, although Baur, if he were consistent, ought to maintain that pure Christianity (*i.e.*, morals without dogma) was only discovered by the modern age. Hence we see how the '*natural explanation*' of Christianity accumulates enigmas instead of solving them."[1] It confutes itself.

Closely connected with the Tübingen school stands the celebrated French critic *Renan*, whose work on the history of the origin of Christianity, in six parts, is a laborious attempt to dispense with the supernatural, and to present the facts, which cannot be denied, through the medium of theoretic and, to some extent, fanciful interpretations for the reception of the French public. The title of Renan's work is "*Histoire des origines du Christianisme*, par Ernest Renan, Membre de l'Institut." The different portions of this work were published as follows: (1) *Vie de Jésus:* Paris, 1863. Eighteenth edition,

[1] Christlieb, Lect. viii.

1867. (2) *Les Apôtres:* Paris, 1866. (3) *Saint Paul:* Paris, 1869. (4) *L'Antechrist:* Paris, 1873. (5) *Les Evangiles et la seconde génération chrétienne:* Paris, 1877. (6) *L'Eglise chrétienne:* Paris, 1880. The account which Renan himself gives of the manner in which he wrote the "Vie de Jésus," will serve to show in what spirit the whole work was commenced. He was travelling in Phœnicia and the Holy Land. "I wrote down," he says, "the sketch of the work hurriedly enough in a Maronite hut with five or six books around me. The striking agreement between the descriptions of the New Testament and the places which lay around me, the wonderful harmony between the ideal portrait of the Gospels and the landscape which served as its frame—all these things were a kind of revelation to me." The main motive of the work is thus artistic rather than scientific. The moral and spiritual are subordinated to the realistic and æsthetic view of human life. Admitting, as he does, the substantial genuineness and authenticity of the four Gospels, at least of the Synoptics, taking them as true products of the first century, Renan renounces all attempts to preserve the moral purity either of Christ or of His disciples. He accuses them of Jesuitism and fraud. He distorts, mutilates, and travesties the record. He even defiles it with coarse and indecent innuendoes. Following the life of Mahommed as a supposed basis to explain the history of Jesus, he represents Him as born in Nazareth, not of the lineage of David, but of poor Nazarene parents, richly gifted in nature, but brought up in the narrow sphere of the common people. His history may be divided into three periods. 1. The period of *pure moral teaching.* A very elevated idea of God was formed in the mind of the Galilean Peasant by the combined influences of the study of natural scenery and the Old Testament; His doctrine became that of pure morality and the kingdom of God in the heart. He makes no attempt to explain how this exceptional Peasant so much surpassed His neighbours and contemporaries. He has no faith, himself, in the self-sustaining power of purity. In

order to obtain success, less pure ways are necessary ("des voies moins pures sont necessaires"). Therefore the second period (2) of Christ's work is that of *intoxicated Galilean enthusiasm*, the result of the unfavourable influence of John the Baptist. He describes the Saviour as riding through the country on a mule, surrounded with applauding multitudes, attended by enthusiastic young fishermen as His friends, and women and children in His train, in short, in a perpetual festival of gladness. He became disappointed at His want of success, except among the lower classes, and then determined to make a bold attack upon Judaism by transferring his activity from Galilee to Judea. 3. During the third period, that of *dark fanatical conflict* with Pharisees and ecclesiastical rulers, He was in a state of mind in which His disciples' legendary spirit acted upon Himself, and He sometimes believed that He wrought miracles when He did not, and sometimes united with them in mere trickery, to maintain His reputation. Lazarus, being placed in the sepulchre alive, was called out of it, as though raised by Jesus, to deceive the people. As the conflict with the ruling authorities waxed fiercer, Renan represents Jesus as yielding to temper, becoming severe and petulant, as in His denunciations of His enemies and cursing of the fig tree, and he even dares to speak of Him as "losing some of His original purity in the dull oppressive atmosphere of the little town of Bethany." The resurrection is a fiction, due to the hallucination of Mary Magdalene. The treatment of the biography of Jesus prepares us for a similar mixture of dogmatism and frivolity, in the attempt to explain, on natural principles, the history of the apostles and early Church. While there is considerable learning and acuteness evinced, there is a perverse blindness throughout to moral evidence, and an audacity of assumption which fairly takes away the breath of any candid and cautious student.[1]

[1] See the article before referred to, *Quarterly Review*, July, 1880; *Neander's* "Life of Christ"; *Lange's* ditto; Christlieb's "Modern Doubt and Christian Belief," lecture vi., and many other works, such as Dr.

The following summary is given by Dr. Christlieb of the counter-charges which the Christian apologist is able to substantiate against the whole of the modern critical school, in their rejection of the miraculous narrative of the gospel:[1]— "1. They fail in historical perception. They treat the records untruthfully to suit their purpose. 2. They leave altogether unexplained the existence of the Christian Church. 3. Their theory of the person of Christ breaks down. It is neither Divine nor human, but a mere monstrosity. The dilemma holds them on its horns transfixed—given the moral impurity of Jesus and His disciples, to explain the moral effects of Christianity; given the truth of the gospel history, to deny the Divinity of Christ. 4. They fail to give an intelligent account of the construction of the Gospels. The theory of *myths*, *legends*, *later inventions*, and *exaggerations*, is irreconcilable with the facts of the case, the age, spirit, style of the gospel, the testimony of the Epistles, and the undisputed history of the early Church. 5. They supply no substitute for that which they attempt to take away. Their hard scientific criticism, or flimsy and immoral romanticism, can afford no satisfaction, either to the thoughtful doubter or to the troubled spirit of the sufferer. 6. The whole school of the modern anti-miraculous sceptics is pantheistic. Their thinking is vitiated by their evident denial of the personality of God. They answer themselves by their atheism." It is only on the basis of religion that any examination of the Bible is either candid or practical. Those who come to it with a foregone antagonistic conclusion, are no true critics though they claim the title, and their science is, as the apostle Paul described a very similar tendency, "*science falsely so called.*"

IV. *The assault on historical Christianity by the author of "Supernatural Religion."*

In 1865 appeared the first instalment of a work in three

Pressensé's "L'Ecole Critique et Jésus Christ, à propos de la Vie de Jésus de M. Renan," Paris, 1863. Hurst's "History of Rationalism," pp. 325, etc.

[1] Lecture vi. pp. 443, etc.

volumes, entitled "*Supernatural Religion; an Inquiry into the Reality of Divine Revelation.*" The sixth edition appeared in 1875, with a few slight corrections, but substantially unchanged. This work is said by the author to be "the result of many years of earnest and serious investigation, undertaken, in the first instance for the regulation of personal belief, and now published as a contribution towards the establishment of truth in the minds of others." Throughout, we are struck with the cold, hard, sophistical spirit of the book. A failure to appreciate the force of moral evidence seems to lend mere external and superficial difficulties an exaggerated importance in the eyes of the writer. While arguments are marshalled and details accumulated with considerable cleverness of manipulation, there is too much of the special pleader manifest on every page, an animus against the supernatural, and fixed determination to shake the authority of the sacred writings. Two hundred pages of the work are occupied with an introduction, in which the general argument for miracles is reviewed. The author does not start with an assumption "*that miracles are impossible*," but he maintains that they are "*antecedently incredible.*" By this, he means just what Hume meant, that they are "*against experience.*" To assert that they are against *universal* experience is, of course, a *petitio principii*, for if they occurred at all, they must be admitted as phenomena of experience. "*Antecedent improbability*" means no more than against "*the current of uniform experience.*" Yet even that can scarcely be proved, for the writer admits what he calls "*a permanent stream of miraculous pretension.*" We may deny the whole body of supposed experience, embracing miracles, but the fact remains, men have, in every age of the world's history, believed in miracles. Therefore, whether they believed superstitiously or not, it is mere assumption to say that experience disproves miracles. The scientific mind denies them a place in its experience, but the inference that all nature is as the scientific man describes it, can only be subjectively true, and is not proved. We cannot

deny that miracles are possible; we cannot affirm that they are *any more* antecedently improbable or incredible than any other inexplicable phenomena. The word *incredible* is ambiguous. Incredible *to whom?* To the vast majority of mankind, miracles are both credible and believed.

Again, when the writer is describing the nature of the testimony which he proposes to examine, he lays down the principle "*that no testimony which is not clear and indubitable can be of any value*," but he forgets that the *clearness and indubitableness* must be exceedingly difficult to test at this distance of time, while yet it might have been amply sufficient to the apostles and their immediate successors. In a vast agglomeration of evidence such as that of Christianity, there may be much which is only secondary in the rank of certainty, but which yet, taken in connection with other evidence, produces moral conviction. In all cases of evidence, as in courts of law, there is much testimony relied on which, regarded in and by itself, is neither clear nor indubitable. The writer, again, speaks of the *ignorance and superstition* of the age in which the miracles were said to have been wrought. He takes that as a reason for rejecting the evidence of witnesses. But he must apply that same disparagement to so vast a number of, at all events, true-minded and morally elevated men, both under the Old Testament and under the New, that his argument proves too much. The New Testament writers show that they were neither ignorant nor superstitious. On the contrary, they were men (as Mr. Isaac Taylor has shown in his "Restoration of Belief") entirely free from all enthusiastic extravagance, evincing a depth of character and knowledge quite inconsistent with such weakness and folly. Because the early Christians were ignorant of science, it does not at all follow that they were ignorant of the laws of the moral nature, and incapable of estimating facts. A juryman may be unscientific, but perhaps none the less, but rather the more, capable of weighing facts and looking at them with an unsophisticated and simple clearness of vision. What we have

to prove is, not that miracles occurred, but that those who gave us the narratives *believed* them to have occurred. "In all points," says the writer, "Christianity is emphatically a supernatural religion, claiming to be Divine in its origin, superhuman in its essence, and miraculous in its evidence. It cannot be accepted without an absolute belief in miracles, and those who profess to hold the religion, while they discredit its supernatural elements, have widely seceded from ecclesiastical Christianity." The question therefore is, did the early Church accept the Divine revelation as Divine on the strength of the attestation given to the miracles? To this there seems but one answer. The whole structure of the Bible rests upon miracles; and, as this anonymous writer evidently sees, the attack must be made, not on the miracles themselves, but on the authenticity and trustworthiness of the Christian documents. The early Church believed in miracles, and the early Church conquered the world, with that belief in miracles at the very heart of its creed.

Passing on, then, to the criticisms of the author upon the sacred writings of the New Testament, we begin with the Synoptic Gospels. Here there are two facts, both of which are employed as arguments against the authority of the Gospels—the *silence* of early Christian writers as to the Gospels, and the nature of their *quotations*. As to the first, the *silence*, the author puts the argument thus: "When writers who quote largely from the Old Testament and other sources, deal with subjects which would naturally be assisted by reference to our Gospels, and still more so by quoting such works as authoritative, and yet we find that not only they do not show any knowledge of those Gospels, but actually quote passages from unknown sources, or sayings of Jesus derived from tradition, the inference must be that our Gospels were either unknown or not recognised as works of any authority at the time."[1] Now the very next sentence to this refers to the opening words of the third Gospel, "*Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order*," etc. (Luke i. 1–4). A great number of gospels,

[1] Vol. i.

or fragments of gospels, were in existence at or shortly before the time when St. Luke wrote. Is not this a sufficient explanation of the fact that the earliest Christian writers did not quote our four Gospels as though they were authoritative? It was, possibly, some considerable time before the three Gospels we now possess superseded those fragmentary and incomplete and unauthoritative gospels referred to by St. Luke, but they did so at last; and that the early Fathers, such as the apostolical Fathers, did not quote very distinctly from our Gospels, does not prove that they were not in existence, only that they had not as yet superseded the rest. As to quotations, the writer says: "When we meet with quotations closely resembling, or, we may add, even identical, with passages which are found in our Gospels, the source of which, however, is not mentioned, nor is any author's name indicated, the similarity, or even identity, cannot by any means be admitted as evidence that the quotation is necessarily from our Gospels, and not from some other source different from our Gospels."[1] That is to say, that other gospels, or portions of gospels, existed; that occasionally it is doubtful if the Christian writer quotes from our present Gospels or from some others. But nothing can be brought forward which disproves the authority of our Gospels. If, as we may suppose, our Gospels were the result of a collection of gospel writings, selected and arranged, still all that is proved is that other gospels existed. Then, the greater the authority of those which survived. On what ground were they preserved? Surely because they represented apostolical authority. The writer endeavours to postpone as far as possible the date of our Gospels, in order to invalidate their testimony. But if certain writings are accepted by the Church of Christ in the face of all others, either they must in themselves have been more worthy of acceptance, or the early Church must have deliberately conspired to substitute a false narrative for the true. Nor will it avail to say the age was "ignorant and superstitious." On the contrary, it is the ignorant and superstitious

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gospels which were rejected, so far as we can now learn from the character of the apocryphal writings which remain. How can we believe that such gospels as ours were the *least* trustworthy and not the *most!* They harmonize with the tone of the whole New Testament. They are simple, and straightforward, and truthful in style. We have no evidence of any accounts of the life of Jesus having been in circulation more trustworthy than these.

As to the quotations from the Gospels in the early Fathers, the statements of the writer have been closely followed by Dr. Sanday, in his able work "The Gospels in the Second Century," before referred to. We must refer the reader to that volume for a thorough refutation of his position. The most laboured portion of the anonymous work is that which deals with the authority of the *Acts of the Apostles.* To the disbeliever in the supernatural, it is of great importance to invalidate the Acts, for it not only asserts the miracles of the resurrection and ascension, but, as the author puts it, "*presents to us a new cycle of miracles, and so profoundly introduces supernatural agency into the history of the early Church, that in comparison with it the Gospels seem almost sober narratives.*" Now, it is alleged, that there is no other testimony for these miracles than the words of the book itself; but they are connected with the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, and with the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ to His throne. Surely there is abundant evidence elsewhere, in the history of the Church and of the world from those days, which cannot be explained except on the acceptance of the statements in the Acts. The first question to be answered is, was the Acts a Christian writing acknowledged to have apostolical authority about the time of the apostles? As to whether St. Luke wrote it, that is really a subordinate question. Now the anonymous author goes through the evidence from early Christian writers, Clemens Romanus, Pastor Hermas, the Ignatian Epistles, the Epistle of Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Hegesippus, Papias of Hierapolis, the Epistle to Diognetus, Tatian, Athenagoras,

the Epistle of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons, the Canon of Muratori, and so on to Irenæus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Tertullian, and Origen. It is not possible here to follow him step by step; he is careless and superficial in his argument. But the main point is this. He admits that, at the end of the second century, the Acts was both acknowledged by Christian writers as inspired, and ascribed to St. Luke, but he denies that such evidence is of any value to us. But, in reply, we say, that such men, at the end of the second century, would not have dared to speak as they do of the Acts, unless it had been admitted to be authoritative long before their time. Dean Alford frankly allows that the references in Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Justin Martyr, and Papias are not to be depended upon as evidence. But there is a quotation of the words of Stephen the martyr in the Epistle of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons ("like Stephen the perfect martyr, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge"), which would prove that the book of the Acts was in existence in A.D. 177–8, supposing that it be a genuine quotation. And if not a quotation, at least the facts of Stephen's history, and his dying words, were known at that time, so far off from Jerusalem as Gaul. Surely we must allow some fifty years or more for such a journey of tradition across Europe, which would bring us to A.D. 120. Is it at all likely that so early as 120 A.D., when the Church was, at all events, comparatively free from superstitions and ecclesiastical (hierarchical) influences, such a book, if spurious, would, or could, be forced upon it, and obtain such a currency as to travel from Asia to Vienna and Lyons?

Again, we know that the heretics, such as Marcion and the Manichæans, rejected the Acts for dogmatical reasons, as both Tertullian and Augustine testify. But why did they not disprove its canonical authority, upon external grounds, if they were able to do so? Tertullian well said, if Marcion acknowledged Paul as an apostle, where did he get his information from, but from the Acts? How could he then deny its authority except as he rejected its doctrine? "*Cur*

Acta respuatis jam apparet," says Tertullian ("Adv. Marcion," v. § 2). But, says this anonymous author in the nineteenth century, Marcion may never have seen the Acts! That is, Tertullian did not know what he said. That St. Paul's authority was resisted by the Judaising party, we know, and had they been able to invalidate the Acts, they would have done so. And that some book like the Acts, containing the history of the Church from the Ascension, should be written, is antecedently probable, yea morally certain. Where is there the smallest trace of anything, at all comparable with the Acts, for which we may suppose that this work was substituted? It is admitted by almost every critic that, if genuine, it was written by St. Luke, and therefore stands or falls with the third Gospel; and Ewald well observes that the superscription attached to the Gospel "*according to St. Luke*," which is found in all the MSS. of the Gospels, is amply sufficient, being so ancient, to warrant our believing that St. Luke wrote it. If he wrote the Gospel, he wrote the Acts, for they are plainly by the same hand. Admit that the superscription is only tradition, still it is tradition of a very early date, and worth a thousand mere objections derived from internal evidence, such as are pressed by modern critics. It is alleged that the writer could not have been an intimate companion of St. Paul, because there are apparent discrepancies between the Acts and the Epistles, but against such discrepancies we must put the many coincidences (as Paley has shown in his "Horæ Paulinæ"), and had it been the object of the writer to produce a work which exactly fitted in with and explained the Epistles, he could certainly have avoided such discrepancies. Some of the difficulties presented on the surface cannot be entirely removed, but their presence in the book absolutely precludes the supposition that it was written after the Epistles were all in the hands of the Church.

Passing to a minute examination, occupying 259 pages, of the historical value of the Acts, the author rests the whole of his criticism upon the assumption that there was a distinct design in the mind of the writer, and that it is apparent throughout, to

which everything else is subordinate, namely, to exhibit St. Peter and St. Paul as working harmoniously, and to vindicate the latter. The admission of the supernatural in the early Church puts aside this objection. It is the denial of the supernatural which alone renders it necessary. It is said to be an "*apologetic and conciliatory*" work, an attempt to conciliate the two parties in the early Church, by representing the difference between the views of the two leading apostles as slight and unimportant. Pauline sentiments are freely placed in the mouth of Peter, and Paul is represented as an orthodox adherent of the Church of Jerusalem; or else, it was an effort of Gentile Christianity to bring itself into closer union with the primitive Church, surrendering, in so doing, all its distinctive features and its Pauline origin, and representing the universalism by which it existed as a principle adopted and promulgated from the very first by St. Peter, and the twelve. But it may be replied to all this, that the Epistles of St. Paul, if we except the first two chapters of Galatians, might be represented as written with the same design. We have simply to remember that no such *design* was necessary, because the work of the Spirit itself was in that direction, to see that this gratuitous assumption of dishonesty is irrelevant and monstrous. Grant the truth of the book, then all is clear. Suppose it spurious, then we must call in the help of a lame and unwarrantable theory. There is no "*secret motive or influence*" governing the writer's mind. Motive there is, but not secret, but the one public and pervading influence and motive of the early Church, namely, the power of the Holy Ghost, or the spirit of Christianity, the spirit of Peter and Paul alike, the spirit of unity and peace. We are poor judges of underlying motives. All such arguments are treacherous, and fall back upon the critic who employs them.

The genuineness of Acts is assailed, again, on the ground of a certain parallelism, which the author assumes to have detected, between the accounts of the two apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul. They wrought similar miracles, and their troubles were in some instances similar. This is supposed to

be the result of premeditation, and therefore an indication of spurious history. The so-called parallelism, however, is not confirmed. It is casual, very far from distinct, and easily explicable by the similarity of circumstances and work of the two men. Plainly, the two men, as described, were, both in character and career, widely different. Prominent Christian labourers would at that time, be likely, *in some respects*, to resemble one another, for the same Holy Ghost was bestowed upon all.

The *speeches* of the Acts are then brought forward. They could not, it is said, be historical, because they are so full, and because they are somewhat similar to one another in style and structure. They are compared to the confessedly unhistorical speeches in classical authors, as Livy and Thucydides. But, granting that the exact words were not reported to St. Luke, or to any one else, it is no impossibility that, as in the case of Stephen, the substance of what was said should be remembered, as, *e.g.*, by such a man as Saul of Tarsus; or *reported* by the speakers themselves; or that *short summaries* should be handed about among the churches and compared together by the evangelist, or even brought to the speakers themselves for correction. External evidence to the contrary being wanting, we have a right to accept such reports unless they are *manifestly* unhistorical, as is the case with the classical speeches referred to. The critic describes them as unfitting and incongruous with the circumstances of the time and the character of the speakers. But here, as a German critic puts it, "*everything must depend on an unbiassed judgment.*" That some of the peculiarities of St. Luke's style and thought may be traced in the speeches, may be admitted, and yet they may be genuine. A modification in *form* may leave the original uninjured. All arguments built upon linguistic evidence are certainly unsafe. The use of a form of address, "*Men and brethren*," "*Men and Galileans*," common to all the speeches, is said to betray the hand of an inventor; but why so? Such a mere formal completion of the speech, even if added by St. Luke, is no proof that the speech itself was an invention. *Resemblances of argu-*

ment are adduced, *e.g.*, St. Peter's reference to David, in Acts ii., St. Paul's, in Acts xiii. But why should an inventor resort to such a repetition, and why might not such a familiar argument naturally occur to two apostles? An elaborate list of parallels is drawn up, but they amount to mere trifling resemblances in expression and phraseology, such as would be quite natural, especially when the theme of the speakers was the same, as, *e.g.*, *the Resurrection* and the argument for the Lord's *Messiahship*.

But the main brunt of the assault is reserved to the examination of the facts of the first two centuries, which, it is alleged, disprove the historical verity of the account in the Acts. The relation in which St. Peter and St. Paul stood to one another is said to be differently represented in the Epistles of the latter, and in contemporary and subsequent documents. "*There is no trace in the Acts of angry controversy, of jealous susceptibility, of dogmatic difference, in the circle of the apostles.*" To this it may be replied, that the Acts must not and ought not to be taken as an exact and complete account of all that took place, but as such a statement of facts connected with the introduction of the gospel into the world as should serve the special, spiritual purpose of the book. The main point of the narrative evidently is, to develop the manifestation of Divine power in connection with the preaching of the gospel—in short, to write a historical commentary on the day of Pentecost. Mere differences, therefore, among the apostles would be regarded as temporary and subordinate. That there did exist a Jewish opposition to the gospel, is clear from such passages as ch. xi. 2: "*they of the circumcision contended with Peter*"; ch. xv.: the council of Antioch on the question of the observance of the law of Moses. Again and again, the critic admits that the Acts is a very incomplete history, even as to the apostle Paul himself, its chief subject, omitting many things to which he refers in his Epistles, and stopping short with his arrival and first residence in Rome. It does not even inform us of the result of his appeal to Cæsar. The key to the book is not to

be sought in the comparison with any literary work, but in its spiritual character. It illustrates the mission of the gospel to the whole world. When the great Apostle of the Gentiles is once fairly settled at Rome, the centre of the ancient world, the narrative is cut short, the end is reached. How different such an ending from that which a spurious writer would devise! Let it be remembered, too, that while there would be, doubtless, fierce controversy among certain churches and individuals in respect to St. Paul's authority, we have no reason to believe, from anything which he himself says, or from contemporary sources, that it affected the substantial agreement of the apostles in regard to doctrine. It was a *practical* weakness on the part of St. Peter which gave St. Paul trouble. There was no reason why, in a work professing on the very face of it to be a continuation of the third Gospel, and therefore on the broadest lines of gospel truth, such mere temporary, superficial differences should be prominently dwelt upon. St. Luke was a companion of St. Paul; he would be likely to let such matters fall into the background, taking up only the more permanent aspects of the apostolic work and doctrine.

Without, however, attempting to follow this anonymous critic in his attempt to prove an irreconcilable contradiction between the Acts and the Epistles, a few instances may be mentioned to show the general worthlessness of his reasoning.

(i.) The assumption is boldly made that the first believers and first apostles never entertained the idea of a world-wide religion, and held a Judaistic view of Christianity. This is disproved by the Gospels. Jesus said: "New wine must be put in new bottles," and in His parting commission to His disciples, sent them to all the world. The conduct of the first disciples, in holding aloof from the Jews, and of the Jews, in persecuting "*the sect everywhere spoken against*," shows that although the minds of the disciples might be in some confusion on the subject, they were still prepared for, at least, a *new development* of the old religion. They regarded Jesus Christ as fulfilling and glorifying Judaism; so do we. The

work of the Holy Ghost was the enlightenment and elevation of their minds. St. Paul would not have prevailed over the narrow views of Judaisers, unless he had been able to prove, out of the Scriptures, that his view was God's view from the beginning. The critic states the case much too strongly in his own favour, and his attempt to prove that the Judaisers had the Saviour's teaching on their side utterly breaks down. The following sentence is quite unsupported by the facts of the case: "It is impossible to deny that the total removal of conditions, advocated by the apostle Paul with all the vehemence and warmth of his energetic character, and involving nothing short of the abrogation of the law and surrender of all the privileges of Israel, must have been shocking, not only to the prejudices, but also to the deepest religious convictions of men who, although Christians, had not ceased to be Jews, and, unlike the Apostle of the Gentiles, had been directly and daily in contact with Jesus, without having been taught such revolutionary principles." But Paul was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. Instead of his deepest religious convictions being shocked, they were his support as a Christian. The first apostles were prepared by the whole teaching of their Master, and still more by His violent death, to break away from the false Judaism of the time, and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost was to be the signal for their leaving Jerusalem. In the case of Stephen there is a distinct anticipation of St. Paul's position. Hence our critic denies that it is historical, going even so far as to doubt the existence of Stephen at all, because, forsooth, there is no allusion to him in St. Paul's Epistles. But, as though he were conscious of audacity in this step, he supports it by another, he denies that there is any Pauline doctrine in Stephen's address, although, according to the theory he supports, the writer of the Acts purposely inserted it. A resemblance to the trial and death of Jesus is alleged to be found in the last moments of Stephen, but it is no more than in the mockery of justice and in the violent death. There are difficulties in the address of Stephen, but they are not against

its genuineness, rather they support it, as an inventor would have avoided them. Linguistic resemblances with the language of St. Peter and St. Paul are but a flimsy objection, very unsafely pressed against a narrative transparently simple, straightforward, and truthful in tone and manner.

(ii.) The narratives of Philip and the Eunuch, St. Peter's visit to Lydda and Joppa, the raising of Tabitha, the conversion of Cornelius, and the subsequent action of the apostles at Jerusalem in accepting St. Peter's statement, are all summarily condemned by the author, partly because they contain the supernatural, and partly because they are supposed to be inconsistent with the Epistle to Galatians and St. Peter's subsequent conduct. All this is mere assumption. The only real appearance of difficulty lies in the fact that, in the interview with St. Peter at Antioch, St. Paul makes no allusion to the narrative of Cornelius's conversion. But St. Peter distinctly refers, in his speech at Antioch, to the fact that he preached among the Gentiles, and that there was no difference between Jews and Gentiles, the Holy Ghost being poured out on them and purifying their hearts by faith. "If St. Peter had had such a vision as is described in the Acts, he *could* not have assumed the attitude which he did at Antioch." That is mere begging of the question, and St. Peter himself acknowledged that he *had* given up the difference between Jews and Gentiles. Moreover St. Paul accuses him of departing from his own convictions, that he renounced them at a certain definite time, and withdrew and separated himself, "*fearing them of the circumcision.*" This is stated immediately after he had declared the entire confidence which the Church had given to himself and Barnabas. The critic asks, how could St. Paul have known that St. Peter had been at Cæsarea, and not have mentioned it? We ask, how could St. Paul have been received, as he himself states that he was, unless St. Peter had had some such Divine revelation to which he could appeal, and how could St. Paul have so boldly rebuked him unless such appeal were possible? St. Paul's strong point (see Gal. ii.), was that his

brother apostle had *no excuse* for his vacillation, because he knew that there was no difference between Jew and Gentile. The allusion to Antioch, in Gal. ii. 11 : "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face," requires elucidation. That elucidation is found in Acts xv., where we learn that St. Paul was sent to Antioch with a special deputation, Judas and Silas, from the council held in Jerusalem, to announce the decision arrived at as to the Gentiles, and that St. Paul continued at Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, after at least Judas had gone back. Referring to Galatians, it seems that St. Peter went down to Antioch, and after awhile a certain Judaising party ("certain which came from James"), doubtless a small number of very bigoted men, came to Antioch. Previous to their arrival, St. Peter fully carried out his own acknowledged principles of intercourse with the Gentiles. After their arrival, his courage forsook him, and so St. Paul was compromised by his conduct, and blamed him. "*Barnabas*," says St. Paul in Galatians, "*was carried away with their dissimulation.*" What do we find in Acts? That Barnabas did separate from St. Paul, nominally, indeed, on the ground of their difference as to John Mark, but, we may conclude, the anti-Gentile feeling was really at the root of the difference, for John Mark had departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work, probably under the influence of some Jewish prejudice. Then, lastly, it is well to notice that the blame cast upon St. Peter is, not that he himself lived as the Jews, but "if thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, *why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?*" He was enforcing the Jewish law on the Gentile Church.

(iii.) The last, and chief portion of the criticism of the Acts, is based on a comparison of the account there given of St. Paul with that in the Epistles. It is assumed that the writer of the Acts knew the Epistles. But this is mere assumption. The Acts was certainly written by the evangelist. It was, therefore, probably written before the Epistles, or, at least, independently

of them. Let us look at a few of the difficulties on which the critic lays stress. The movements of the apostle immediately subsequent to his conversion are said to be differently represented in Acts ix. 26, etc., and in Gal. i. and ii. If the writer of Acts knew Galatians, why should such discrepancy occur? The natural inference is, that both are genuine writings, and that they are independent of one another. Discrepancies in narratives are no proof of spuriousness. It is suggested by the critic that the writer of the Acts had a motive in concealing facts, *e.g.*, St. Paul's journey to Arabia, and in representing others differently, *e.g.*, the journey to Jerusalem. His object was to show how closely St. Paul was associated with the other apostles. But if, as the critic supposes, the writer knew the Epistle to the Galatians, and wrote long after the events, how could he suppose that such a travesty of fact would find acceptance? The glaring discrepancy stands as a clear mark of genuineness in both writings. It is of little importance to effect a reconciliation. It is a mere matter of detail. Were we possessed of better information, the whole history would, doubtless, be transparent, and the two accounts justified. Even though not reconciled, even though the Acts were proved incorrect in such insignificant detail, the general historical truthfulness of the narrative would not be invalidated. Again, referring to the account, in Galatians, of St. Paul's introduction to the other apostles, it is said to be difficult not to conclude that there was some other version of it current which the apostle desired to correct. In that case, how could the writer of the Acts persist in giving the uncorrected version? Referring to the account of the council of Jerusalem, in Acts xv., the critic has the audacity to assert that the writer has put St. Paul's words into the mouth of St. Peter, borrowing from the Epistle to the Galatians for the purpose. No Christian Church could have accepted such an account as genuine. As evidence that St. Peter could not really have used such language, we are reminded that he was called "*the apostle of the circumcision!*" But that title simply described the division of

labour among the apostles (see Gal. ii. 8), and St. Paul expressly states that St. Peter, though a Jew, "*lived as do the Gentiles.*" Not habitually, suggests the critic, but only under the temporary influence of St. Paul! The whole form of St. Paul's rebuke would be destroyed by such a view, for evidently he assumed that his brother apostle accepted the same gospel with him, and hence he says, he "*did not walk according to the truth of the gospel.*" True, St. Paul did not refer to the decree of the council of Jerusalem, but the argument of Galatians did not refer to such matters as were dealt with there. It concerned the general character of the apostles, and the spiritual nature of the gospel. St. Paul preferred to base his reasonings on the authority he claimed. He had no need to refer to decisions of his brethren, though, doubtless, he respected them. Lastly, as to the confirmation of the Acts by the evidence of the second century, the critic is equally rash and inconsistent. The emancipation of the gospel from Mosaism is said to have been by a deadly struggle, not by "*any liberal action or enlightened guidance on the part of the elder apostles.*" But St. Paul's Epistles were written to Jews and Gentiles, and their evidence is against such a view. We have no single fact or writing which bears out the statement, that the elder apostles remained to the last prejudiced Jews, and had no such idea of the gospel as St. Paul.

Concluding the examination of Acts, the critic says: "The phenomena presented by the Acts of the Apostles become perfectly intelligible, when we recognise that it is the work of a writer living long after the occurrences related, whose pious imagination furnished the apostolic age with an elaborate system of supernatural agency far beyond the conception of any other New Testament writer, by which, according to his view, the proceedings of the apostles were furthered and directed, and the infant Church miraculously fostered. It is not an impartial statement of facts, but a reproduction of legends or a development of traditions, shaped and coloured according to the purpose or the pious views of the writer."

Now, if this spurious work was produced at the end of the second century, with all the Christian writings distinctly in view, and if the aim of it was to support the Pauline view of the gospel which was then accepted, how is it that the writer did not take even ordinary care to make his facts tally with the Pauline writings? And if the conflict was then past already, long since past, between Judaism and Paulinism, what could induce a Christian writer to sit down and deliberately manipulate facts and traditions for the purpose of exalting St. Paul? If the glorification of St. Paul were intended, why stop short of his martyrdom? Why not transport him to heaven on a cloud of miracles? On the contrary, the tone of the narrative is sober and restrained. Although occupying a large space, St. Paul is only the herald of the gospel. When the message reaches Rome, the messenger sinks into oblivion, the story is broken off. Take the book as genuine, what difficulties are there in it compared with those which beset the critic? The supernatural is there, it is true, but it is in all the Bible. The discrepancies are such as would be antecedently likely to occur in a genuine, independent record. The miracles accord with the spirit of the apostolic writings, and with the facts of primitive Christianity. Some of the speeches we can scarcely believe to have been spoken *exactly* as we find them recorded, but we may say the same of the Lord's discourses in the Gospels. We can imagine no method by which speeches could be handed down, which would not present the same difficulty. If not word for word, they must be summarised. If summarised from memory, and preserved by tradition, some slight trace of the summariser's or narrator's manner will be in them, but not so much as to militate against their substantial truthfulness. The assault upon the authority of the Acts thus totally breaks down. It is refuted by the one fact that, notwithstanding all the alleged contradictions between St. Luke's narrative and St. Paul's Epistles, the book was accepted by the early Church as genuine, and has never been really rejected by any portion of the Church since the third century. It is

simply impossible to imagine it to have been written at the end of the second century. There is no trace in it, from beginning to end, of that *sacerdotalism* which had already, before that time, begun to lay hold of the Christian Church; nor is there, what we find in almost all the writings of that time, full blown *episcopacy*. Had the book come from any Father of the second century, it would certainly have spoken much less decidedly for St. Paul, and it would have more clearly manifested the priestly tendencies of the later age.

After the long discussion of the Gospels and Acts, the critic dismisses the rest of the New Testament in a very summary manner, so far as the authenticity of the books is concerned. His main object being to eliminate the supernatural, he thinks he can afford to put aside those New Testament writings which do not bear upon his inquiry, viz., *the Catholic Epistles* (James, Jude, 1 and 2 Peter, Epistles of John), Hebrews, the Apocalypse. Some of these were for a considerable period among the *Antilegomena or disputed books*. Westcott enumerates seven, James, Jude, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Hebrews, and Revelation. These are said to have *no weight*, because they only slowly acquired authority, as by the lapse of time it became more difficult to examine their claims! But are they not evidences of the current of testimony? Do they not imply a continued belief in miracles? Taken with the rest of the New Testament, do they not show what *kind* of writings were deemed worthy of an apostle? Could they have been accepted as apostolic had they not agreed with the general character of apostolic writings? Does not the long controversy over them point to the carefulness of the early Church, not to the contrary? In the case of the First Epistle of Peter, about which there can be no reasonable doubt, the critic admits that the apostle *in some way believed* in the resurrection of his Master, but as he gives no corroborative evidence, nothing is *proved* as to the fact by his faith! In the case of the Pauline Epistles, following Baur, the critic accepts in the main, as genuine, Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Romans. With these Epistles must be

received, in some way, St. Paul's testimony to miracles. This he undertakes to examine.

1. He boldly denies that St. Paul ever claims to have himself performed a miracle. The main passages in question are these: Rom. xv. 18; 1 Cor. xii. 10, 28, 29; 2 Cor. xii. 12; Gal. iii. 5. The whole gist of the controversy lies in the interpretation of such words as *σημεῖα, τέρατά, δυνάμεις, ὁ ἐνεργῶν δυνάμεις*, etc., etc. Westcott, Sanday, and others have shown that the manner of reference is an argument in favour of the apostle having frequently performed miracles. Had they not been a common occurrence, the allusion would have been special and particular. The critic, on the contrary, reasons that because the reference is general, nothing can be built on it. He might as well reason that because a physician's cures are not on his door-plate, he has never effected any. Not only does St. Paul speak of miracles, but claims to be approved an apostle by miracles.

2. The attempt is made to show that the expression "*signs and wonders*" was taken from the LXX., and had no special technical meaning, and did not point to miracles. The argument is both weak and disingenuous. Speaking of the word *δυνάμεις*, translated "*miracles*," it is admitted to be rightly so translated in the New Testament and patristic writings, but conveniently denied that St. Paul used it in this sense, the critic contending for the rendering "*powers*," not "*effects*." But surely, if it be said that signs were wrought—2 Cor. xii. 12 (*κατειργάσθη*)—in the apostle, and the signs are said to be *σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα καὶ δυνάμεις*, the meaning *must* be a *manifested* power. It would be to throw confusion into the language to render *δυνάμεις* "*spiritual*" effects wrought in the souls of the converts.

3. The same kind of attempt is made to reason away the force of the word gifts (*χαρίσματα*) in 1 Cor. xii., because they are ascribed to the Spirit of God. Spiritual gifts had their external manifestations, and to say that they were not miraculous is to deny the evidence of the whole of the New Testament. The apostle Paul could not have possessed the power of healing, it

is said, or he would have healed Epaphroditus or Trophimus! The gift was not used capriciously and arbitrarily, but as in all other cases, by the direction of that Holy Ghost to whom it was ascribed.

4. Treating of *the gift of tongues*, the writer endeavours to exhibit a contradiction between the narrative in Acts ii. and the statement of St. Paul in 1 Cor. xiv., etc., but he takes for granted that the account in Acts is that of a supernatural gift of speaking foreign languages. This is unnecessary. The people heard a tongue spoken, and each heard it *as* his own language. St. Paul's account is that of a mysterious tongue, the key of which had to be supernaturally supplied. In the Acts, we must suppose the gift of *interpretation* was poured out on the hearers, a miraculous elevation of mind in the audience corresponding with the miraculous gift of speech. The expression employed in Acts—λαλεῖν ἑτέραις γλώσσαις—is quite consistent with this view, for the words which follow supply the necessary explanation—καθὼς τὸ Πνεῦμα ἐδίδου αὐτοῖς ἀποφθέγγεσθαι—"*as the Spirit* GAVE *them utterance*." The same "*utterance*" is spoken of in the singular, in verse 6—γενομένης δὲ τῆς φωνῆς ταύτης. The narrative implies that some *one* strange sound went forth, which might be attributed to the excitement of new wine. The phenomenon is *one*. "*This* is that which was spoken of by the prophet." The writer of Acts is charged with inconsistency, and a deliberate imitation of the account in Exodus of the giving of the law at Sinai! And yet this is the work of a man who knew St. Paul's account in his Epistle, and must have foreseen the contradiction he was presenting to the reader! As to the fact of the charism itself, which St. Paul recognises, it was mere religious enthusiasm. "That the phenomena described proceeded from an ecstatic state into which persons of highly excitable nervous organization are very liable to fall, under the operation of strong religious impressions, can scarcely be doubted." And yet, it is admitted, St. Paul believed in the genuineness and supernatural origin of these Divine charismata. But he believed in the reality of

his own visions and revelations. Therefore, reasons the critic, in neither case is he to be trusted. But why not put the converse, he is to be trusted in both? Either St. Paul was an enthusiast, or he was a great and trustworthy man. He is to be followed, says the critic, until he introduces the supernatural, then we renounce him as a fanatic! In other words, the testimony of St. Paul is not examined in an impartial, unbiassed spirit, but with a foregone conclusion. The supernatural is antecedently incredible.

The remainder of this pretentious but most unsatisfactory book is an inquiry into the truth of the resurrection and ascension. It is rightly laid down as the only true and candid view of the facts, that they relate to physical and not mere spiritual or imaginary events. "The resurrection of a man who has once been absolutely dead is not only contrary to *all* human experience, but is a direct breach of firmly established laws of Nature." This assumes (1) that uniform experience is universal experience; (2) that a miracle is a breach of the laws of Nature. Both are assumptions which we absolutely reject. The account of the miracles is given by narrators who write with perfect composure and absence of surprise. This indicates, says the critic, ignorance and superstition. "The casual and momentary expression of hesitation to believe, which is introduced, is evidently nothing more than a rhetorical device or artistic touch to heighten the reality of the scene." And this is put forth as fair criticism! In the face of the gospel narrative! The hesitation was an actual difficulty, utterly inexcusable in the circumstances, for Christ had said that He would rise, and the resurrection was an appropriate conclusion of a history full of miracles. Why should the disciples express surprise? They believed Jesus to be the Son of God; they believed that He raised the dead; they wrote at least thirty years after the event; they had seen the wonders of the day of Pentecost, "that that same Jesus was both Lord and Christ." This is not the place to discuss the discrepancies in the narratives of the evangelists. They are manifest, and

are a strong evidence of the genuineness and independence of the Gospels. In the case of the apostle Paul's testimony, it is indirect as to the resurrection itself, but it is direct as to his own belief in it and his vision of the risen Saviour. The first disciples, says the critic, desired to find fulfilments of Scripture. They had visions of Jesus after His death which were the effects of a mental excitement quite natural. We only know that the disciples thought they had seen Jesus, and therefore concluded that He had risen. "It is a belief coming to us from the age of miracles, unsupported by facts, uncorroborated by evidence, unaccompanied by proof of investigation and unprovided with material for examination. What is such a belief worth? We have no hesitation in saying that it is absolutely worth nothing."[1] The answer to such a rejection of the fundamental miracle of Christianity is the challenge to explain the history of the religion on the assumption that such a belief was false. But this is a branch of the argument which must be more fully carried out in the next chapter. In taking leave of the anonymous work which we have thus examined at considerable length, we may remark that the whole of the writer's criticisms are vitiated by the *à priori* spirit in which they are conducted. They are not a fair examination of facts on every side of them, but only on the side of naturalism. The assumption is made at the outset, this book of the New Testament is to be stripped of the supernatural, and the result is a mere heap of fragments and dry bones which the critic vainly endeavours to put into reasonable shape. Admit the supernatural, then the whole book stands before us a living body of fact. Reject the Divine background, it is a mere confused heap of discordant and irreconcilable statements. The last and most elaborate attack of scepticism has failed. The walls of the Holy City still remain impregnable.

[1] Vol. iii.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ARGUMENT FROM HISTORY.

THE testimony which is presented by the facts of Christian history to the truth of Christ, to the supernatural power of that truth, and to the substantial veracity of the Scripture records as they describe the basis of miraculous facts out of which the Christian Church has gone forth, and upon which it has rested for authority, may be viewed in different ways. We may begin, as Paley did, with the belief of the early Christians, and the life of suffering by which they sealed their faith, as the true and sincere testimony to the facts on which they built it. Then, taking the early Church as resting immediately upon the Scripture records, and reflecting them in its own life, we may pass on from age to age, showing that there is the same basis of fact underlying the whole progress of Christianity, whatever new features may be developed in it, even up to the present time. Or, on the other hand, we may proceed more by an analytical than a synthetical method. We may take the triumph of Christianity in the world as a complex fact, which we study in order to reduce it to its first elements, and going back from any assumed point from stage to stage in the history, we arrive at last at the primitive basis of Christianity, which will be thus proved to contain in it those essential elements, the supernatural and the Divine, which demand an entire submission to its authority. As the former of these two possible treatments of the historical argument has been largely anticipated in the preceding chapters, and may be seen fully set forth in the two works of Paley, "The Evidences of Christianity," and "Horæ

Paulinæ," with the comments and criticisms of Prebendary Row, Bampton Lectures, chapters v., vi., vii., it will better suit the purpose of this Handbook to select the analytical form of the argument, which will enable us to present the testimony of history from both sides,—that which may be called the *natural* side, and that which may be called the *supernatural* side. We do not *begin* with the miraculous, but we *end* with it, and thus, all that is most valuable in Paley's argument is included in the larger view of history which we take. The following propositions we undertake in this chapter to confirm by the facts of history :—

I. Christianity rose to a position of acknowledged superiority and triumph, which has been sufficiently tested in the course of centuries to warrant the confident expectation of its ultimate universal acceptance.

II. The most essential facts of this triumphant progress of Christianity are the proper result of Christianity itself as a Divine system, and cannot be compared with any other facts in history.

III. The providential preparations for the progress of Christianity are themselves evidences of its supernatural origin.

IV. The ecclesiastical Christianity which prevailed during the middle ages, could not have obtained the supremacy it did obtain, unless it had been preceded by an earlier form of Christianity, which came forth from, and bare witness to, the scriptural records.

V. Taking our stand in the second century, and looking back from it to the beginning of the Christian era, it is impossible to doubt that the Scriptures as we now read them, with their supernatural facts, were the foundation on which the faith of primitive Christians was based.

VI. Coming to that primitive faith, of which the corner-stone was the fact of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, it can only be placed at the beginning of such a history as that of Christianity on the ground of its being the faith of sincere,

reasonable, truth-loving men, whose testimony is, *under the circumstances, morally irresistible.*

These propositions we now proceed to confirm by a rapid summary of the historical argument, premising that in all such reasoning we must appeal to the standard of *moral evidence*, and cannot be expected to demonstrate the *absolute certainty* of historical proof, which must, at times, be open to some degree of criticism.

I. *Christianity rose to a position of acknowledged superiority and triumph, which has been sufficiently tested in the course of centuries to warrant the confident expectation of its ultimate universal acceptance.*

We shall assume the admission by all that, from the time of Constantine and the Nicene council, A.D. 325, there was a Christian Church, which, whatever may account for the fact, was, by its widespread extent and political position, the embodiment of a real triumph of Christianity. There is no necessity to ignore the worldly elements which mingled with that triumph. There is no call upon the apologist to separate between the Christian faith itself, and those who professedly embraced it and gave it supremacy. They, at all events, accepted the main points of the Christian creed; and the spread of Christianity, which preceded the imperial favour bestowed upon it, forbids us to think that the worldly power produced the triumph of the spiritual doctrine, but rather, on the other hand, the spiritual doctrine won its way through many opposing difficulties, and through seas of blood, the blood of martyrs and confessors. Afterwards, the political element mingled with it, when prosperity had in some measure corrupted the simplicity of Christian life. It is matter of fact that the change which took place in the sentiment of the imperial government of Rome towards Christianity was due, in great measure, to the reaction from a series of unsuccessful persecutions. "The Christian Church," says Neander, "had come forth victorious out of its last bloody conflict in the Dioclesian persecution. The very author of the persecution, the Emperor Galerius himself, had

been forced to acknowledge that the power of conviction was not to be overcome by fire and sword." But we should be wrong in thinking that because an imperial edict proclaimed liberty of worship to Christians, therefore they were at peace. In the provincial districts of the empire there was much hatred manifested on the part of the heathen, but Christians conquered by returning good for evil, relieving the poor in time of famine, and showing that their doctrine was practically good, until, as Eusebius testifies, "The heathens praised the Christian's God, and pronounced the Christians themselves to be the only pious and God-fearing men." When Constantine came to the throne of the Cæsars, in 306 A.D., he was not himself a Christian, but he soon saw that Christianity was the rising power of his empire. In his conflict with Maxentius, who had seized upon Italy and North Africa, and who was an abandoned, superstitious man, depending upon heathen rites for victory, the emperor, either by the working of his own thoughts, or under the guidance of supernatural signs, was led "to conceive the hope that, by the power of the God of the Christians and the sacred symbol of the cross, he should conquer. He obtained the victory, and from that moment felt that he was indebted for it to the God of the Christians. The sign of the cross became his amulet, of which fact we find many and various indications in the ensuing life of Constantine. After the victory, he caused to be erected in the Forum at Rome his own statue, holding in the right hand a standard, in the shape of a cross, with the following inscription beneath it, 'By this salutary sign, the true symbol of valour, I freed your city from the yoke of the tyrant.'"[1] From that time, it may be said, Christianity was the religion of the Roman empire. The attempt which was made by Julian the Apostate (Emperor 361 A.D.), about half a century afterwards, to restore Paganism, was deliberate and determined, the attempt of a real zealot and highly philosophical and cultivated, and perhaps sincere, heathen, but it utterly failed, and therefore by its failure confirmed the

[1] Neander.

supremacy of Christianity. And we must bear in mind the nature of the victory obtained. Luthardt has well described this supremacy.[1] "Christianity did gain the mastery, yet far from annihilating, it preserved, purified, received into itself, and united with its very being, the cultivation of the ancient world, and transmitted it to posterity. After having taken possession of the Roman world, it laid the German world, which then began to occupy the stage of history, at the feet of Jesus, made its people the instruments of transmitting its doctrines to futurity, and developed in them a new intellectual life. Many a shock had the Church to encounter in its course, fightings within and foes without, the false religion of Mahommed and the wild hordes of Huns and Mongols. But it withstood all these perils and attacks, and was only the more firmly rooted in the minds of men, the more firmly planted in the midst of all human interests. A band of men, indeed, appeared towards the close of the last century, who strove to put an end to the religion of Jesus Christ, and a storm arose in France which threatened the extinction of the Christian Church. But the storm blew over, and the Church stood fast, while the faith of Christ did but acquire fresh strength and gladness from the troubles it endured and from the terrible commotions of the times." We may fairly point to the facts of the last century, followed by the wonderful diffusion of Christianity during the present, as abundantly showing that the doctrine of Christ is indestructible, and that it is destined to conquer the world.

The following interesting note, appended to a recent edition of Paley's Evidences by the editor, Rev. F. Malleson, on the modern missionary zeal, may here be quoted as putting the facts concisely before us. "At the time when Paley wrote, Christian mission work was just in its infancy (1794). After the long inactivity of ages, men awoke to the consciousness that an unfulfilled duty was lying at their doors, and reproaching them with their guilty indifference to the spread of the gospel. The case is now widely different from that presented by Dr.

[1] Apol. Lectures: "Fundamental Truths of Christianity," p. 241, etc.

Paley. In future history, the nineteenth century will be remembered, among many other conspicuous marks, as the age of the revival of missions to heathen lands. We are not yet advanced far beyond the beginning of this sacred enterprise, yet it may be questioned whether in the first century after the ascension greater accessions were made to the visible body of the Church than are recorded in this age. It is interesting to compare the poor account given by Dr. Paley of the result of missionary labours in his day, with those which can now be put forward, in the following table :—

	Income.	English Missionaries.	Native Pastors and others.	Members or Communicants.	Native Christns.
Total of three great Societies : Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Ch. Missionary Soc., London Missionary Society.	£445,782	885	14,709	122,035	529,452

The results are taken from reports of 1877, and might be largely added to.[1] The amount annually spent in spreading Christianity is certainly considerably over a million sterling. And the reports of the work which is accomplished in the various missionary fields, especially in India and China, not to mention the smaller spheres of Madagascar and the Pacific Islands, with the opening continent of Africa, encourage the hope of a much more rapid victory of the truth in the future. "Vast masses are shaken from their old faith, and only waiting for a favourable opportunity to cast it off, if possible, without suffering the well-known penalty for their desertion of their idols. Then let it also be borne in mind that the progress of Christianity must in the nature of things be, not merely in arithmetical but geometrical progression—that is, not as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc., but as 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, etc."

But there is no need to dwell longer on the first stage of our argument. It will not be denied that Christianity has

[1] See Christlieb : "Protestant Foreign Missions : their Present State. A universal survey." Translated by D. B. Croom, M.A. (Nisbet, 1880.)

triumphed, and still triumphs; but the objection is made that this is not due to Christianity itself, which is destined to lose its power before the increasing intelligence of modern times, but to subsidiary influences, which all along the line of the history have been at work to prepare the way for, and secure the advancement of, this religion, better in itself than heathenism, but, not, any more than the religions superseded by it, the result of supernatural antecedents. The next proposition, then, is one of great importance in the argument.

II. *The most essential facts of the triumphant progress of Christianity are the proper result of Christianity itself, as a Divine system, and cannot be compared with any other facts in history.*

"The progress of Christianity," says Luthardt, "is that of Jesus Christ. When we say Christianity, we do, in effect, say Jesus Christ, for everything depends upon Him. And what Christianity means, is to bow before Christ, and honour Him as the only and everlasting Saviour of us all. Christianity, however, is not merely a power possessing external sovereignty, but a power exercising an inward and spiritual authority. Not merely the external religions of the various nations, but the entire intellectual life of mankind, has been conquered and renewed thereby. With Christianity a new era dawned upon the human mind, and the whole moral and social life of our race. Christianity introduced the *era of humanity*. Not before its advent did men look upon themselves as members of one great family. Not before were *the rights of human personality* acknowledged. What have been termed *the rights of man*, are the fruit of Christianity. It made no changes in the external arrangements of society; it left laws and privileges, manners and conditions, customs and ranks, as it found them; but it introduced a new spirit into all these relations of life. It did not even externally abolish *slavery*, but it taught all to recognise in the slave a man, a Christian brother, and thus gave an internal blow to this objectionable institution. It raised *the condition of women* from a degraded to a most

honourable and influential one. It made *love*, which, as Montesquieu says, at the time of its introduction still bore only a form which cannot be named, the noblest and tenderest power of mental and spiritual life. It withdrew *children*, whom the heathen world had felt no scruple at destroying, either before or after birth, because they were regarded as property which its possessors were fully justified in disposing of at their pleasure, from the arbitrary power of their parents, and placed them under the Saviour's protection, by declaring them to be, by baptism, specially His. Not till Christianity appeared, did *the love of one's neighbour*, in the true sense of the word, exist. Christianity introduced humanity into the world, and inculcated the virtue of compassion. Care for *the sick and poor*, which has played so famous a part in the history of the Christian world, was one of its happy fruits. That spirit of love, of resignation, of self-sacrifice, which is the loveliest and noblest product of the moral life, proceeded from Christianity, from the cross of Christ. It was Christianity which broke down the wall of partition between *ranks*, *nations*, *and states*. Not before, did there exist upon earth such a thing as *international law*, upon which, in our days, the whole framework of society depends. That history is not a continuous war of all against all, that right and law form the foundation of national life, and that consequently *commerce* and *intercourse*, and a general *civilization* of mankind, have been rendered possible upon earth, are blessings for which we are indebted to Christianity. And with the sway of law in individual states, it has combined the spirit of *gentleness*, and reminded men that even a transgressor is still a man, and should be an object of our *compassion*, because he is an object of *Divine* pity, and because it is the *will of God* to save his soul. Together with the rights of personality, which Christianity acknowledged, it established also *the rights of private judgment and liberty of conscience*. The first defenders of Christianity were also the first proclaimers of liberty of conscience ; and how much soever this principle may at times have been sinned against by the advo-

cates of the Church, yet liberty of conscience, the necessity of which has now become a matter of universal conviction and admission, was itself the fruit of Christianity. But it was not merely liberty which Christianity granted to the conscience; it did this indeed, but it did far more: it brought also comfort to the conscience, peace to the soul, delivery from the sense of guilt, consciousness of pardon, assurance of God's mercy on the ground of that ever-availing atonement for sin by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, whereby conscience is healed of its wounds, the mind relieved from anxiety, and the heart from heaviness, in which lies the best comfort in all sufferings, the best remedy for all the sorrows of this life, and which, at the same time, constitutes the true moral power of all working and acting. For life is valuable in proportion to the work effected therein; but the power of happy working depends upon a good conscience, assured of God's forgiveness. Hence Christianity, by its assurance of God's mercy in Christ, must become at the same time the source of a new and hitherto unknown moral power. The ancient world was unable to form even a distant imagination of such characters—thoroughly moral characters, equally great in doing as in suffering, in self-denial as in activity, as Christianity has produced. It was the infusion too of this new moral power which fertilized, developed, and ennobled the mental efforts of man in the various departments of *art and science.* What but Christianity called forth, from the hidden depths of the heart and mind, the strict genuine *earnestness and versatility* of scientific research, the sublime *purity and truth* of artistic representation? the *depth*, the *psychological truth*, the abundance, of poetic productions? In short, Christianity became the power of a new life to mankind, not only in a religious, but in an intellectual and moral sense."[1]

Taking this as a fair and moderate estimate, from the Christian point of view, of the influence which Christianity has exercised, the question which has to be decided is, how far such influence was due to that which belonged to the

[1] Pp. 243–5.

substance of the Christian religion? Can we conceive the triumphant progress to have been made unless the following had been the distinctive features of the Christian religion? 1. The *person* of Christ. 2. The *cross* of Christ. 3. The *Church* of Christ. 4. The *doctrine* of Christ. 5. The *worship* of Christ. 6. The *promised glory* of Christ.

"Our curiosity," says Gibbon, in his celebrated *fifteenth chapter* of his "History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," "is naturally prompted to inquire by what means the Christian faith obtained so remarkable a victory over the established religions of the earth? To this inquiry, an obvious but satisfactory answer may be returned; that it was owing to the convincing evidence of the doctrine itself, and to the ruling providence of its great Author." Although there is an intentional sarcastic sneer in these words, as is shown by the rest of the chapter, still, as the sceptic admits, such causes must be acknowledged to be the *primary* causes of the success of a religion, however we describe the *secondary*. The doctrine itself, and the providential favour of God, must be put first. We may divide the latter under two heads—(i.) The aid which Christianity received from the *supernatural* agency which mingled with its propagation; (ii.) The providential appointment of circumstances favourable to it—some of which have been well described, as we shall see, by such writers as *Gibbon* and *Renan*, although with a mistaken estimate of their operation.

But putting aside, for the present, the consideration of these aids to the progress of Christianity, we ask, what was the substance of the religion itself which obtained the victory? No one is able to deny, that the religion which spread so rapidly and irresistibly during the first three centuries of the Christian era, was distinguished from all the religions which were superseded by it, by the pre-eminence of the Person from whom it derived its name. True, there were differences among the Christians as to their views of the person of Christ: some did not believe in His Divinity, and the doctrine of His

Person was at that time only imperfectly formulated. But the characteristic of the religion was its exaltation of the name of One who had lived and died in Palestine. It was not a proclamation of Judaism, or a mere negative denunciation of idolatry, or a moral system superior to any other, or a magnificent cultus attracting the people by its fascinations. It was the announcement of salvation in the name of Jesus Christ as at the first in Jerusalem.

Again, there can be no hesitation, on the part of any candid student of history, in admitting, that the *cross of Christ* was prominently put forward, as representing an essential distinction of Christianity. It commemorated the sacrificial death of the Lord, and through the memory of His death it also celebrated His victory over death, His resurrection; but it also set forth the main principle of Christian life, which is that of self-sacrifice, a faith overcoming the world by entire submission of self to the will of God. In this respect there can be no comparison made between Christianity and other religions; for while they have obtained their influence by pandering to the weakness and corruption of human nature, Christianity, on the other hand, preached the Cross, which "to the Jews was a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness," a doctrine of self-denial which never could have been victorious in the world unless it had been divinely enforced.

The believers in Christ became a society, a *Church*, which, it must be admitted, was a totally different manifestation of religious life from anything to be found in heathenism, and which we can scarcely conceive of as holding together by mere force of ordinary association; community of thought, feeling, and action. Had the world been at once obedient to the proclamation of the gospel, it might then be argued that Christian churches arose naturally and maintained themselves by ordinary means; the accepted faith requiring an expression in life, and that life taking the form of community as a matter of course. But history shows us the fact of a world opposed fiercely to Christianity, and for three

centuries subjecting believers to the most terrible ordeal of persecution. That an individual should endure such a trial, and believe all the more firmly the more he is persecuted, might be attributed to the natural self-assertion of the human spirit, which defies the tyrant who would destroy its liberty, and deepens its convictions by suffering for them. But it is inconceivable that the Christian Church should have developed itself under such adverse circumstances into a supreme strength, unless there were principles of union within it which were not of this world. It must not be forgotten that the hierarchical system, which grew up gradually out of the simple constitution of the apostolic age, was itself the result of the Church's advancing power, and not the cause of it. The rulers of the Christian communities became worldly rulers because the world submitted itself more and more to their influence. It would, therefore, be an unfair method of argument to ascribe the progress of Christianity to its alliance with worldly power. That no doubt explains much of the external triumph of the Church during the middle ages, but it does not explain the history of the first three centuries, and particularly of that which immediately followed the age of the apostles. How was it that Christianity triumphed, when it was the religion of the poor and despised and persecuted? How was it that the Christian communities held together and maintained their very exceptional constitution, notwithstanding that they were aided by no surrounding bond of external circumstances, such as wealthy institutions, protecting laws, favourable public sentiment, etc., etc., but, on the contrary, depended entirely on the internal force of their faith? No enumeration of mere secondary causes will explain away this main feature of the fact. The Church grew and triumphed, not because it was assisted to do so from without, but because it was in itself a vital fact which was seeking development.

This leads us to the next point. The characteristic of the early Church is a certain definite *doctrine*, which was undoubtedly professed at all times as the distinctive creed of

those who separated themselves from the world, and by baptism united themselves with the Christian community. Without entering here into any discussion of the antiquity of the Apostles' Creed, it is certain there was some kind of confession of faith, an apostolical tradition of doctrine, which, whether embracing more or fewer elements, testifies to the fact that it was their *faith* which distinguished Christians. We cannot, therefore, ignore that doctrine which was professed, when we are regarding the progress and triumph of Christianity. It was the victory of the *doctrine*, whatever that may have been. It was the persuasion of men to accept a certain body of truth, and live and die for it. Gibbon is therefore more right than he himself would allow, when he says that "*the convincing evidence of the doctrine itself*," is the primary cause of the success. Undoubtedly it was, and that especially at the first, when the foundations of the religion were laid. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believed" (1 Cor. i. 21). The chief means by which Christianity was at first propagated was preaching of its doctrines, that is, of the facts and truths which form the substance of it; and that *first propagation*, with its success, which was simply marvellous and inexplicable on any merely natural principles, includes all that followed. It is not the triumph of the third century which is alone to be considered, but that which led up to it, "the evidence of the doctrine itself."

The doctrine being accepted, we can easily understand *the life* which flowed out of it. But the life apart from the doctrine would be a stream which had no source. The worship of Jesus Christ was maintained in the early Church with great difficulty, but still with ever growing distinctness and zeal, until the worship of heathenism vanished before it. And that worship included the reading of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and the singing of hymns, as we know from Pliny, Lucian, and other extraneous authorities, apart from the Christian history itself. The maintenance of a Christian form of worship, however simple, demanded a continuous Christian

life, and the life must have been the expression of a distinct faith, otherwise it could not have remained as the life of a community. Where there is no doctrine, there is no foundation on which a Church can be built. The congregation gradually disperses as the influence of individuals dies away.

And then, lastly, there was constantly before the minds of the early Christians the *promise of Christ's glory*, which they expected to appear, which some of them expected would appear in their own time, which all believed to be the final consummation, in which all present sufferings would be more than compensated. Here we may call in the testimony of Gibbon himself, although he employs it in a sceptical spirit. His object seems to be, to show that the exaggerated ideas of the Christians acted upon the heathen world in the way of exciting terror and hope; but it is surely reasoning in a vicious circle, to ascribe the power of Christianity to its superiority over heathenism in revealing and assuring immortality, and then to deny its validity by ascribing the effect to the weakness and superstition of those who yielded to it. "The ancient Christians," says Gibbon, "were animated by a contempt for their present existence, and by a just confidence of immortality, of which the doubtful and imperfect faith of modern ages cannot give us an adequate notion. The assurance of a Millennium was carefully inculcated by a succession of Fathers from Justin Martyr and Irenæus, who conversed with the immediate disciples of the apostles, down to Lactantius, who was preceptor to the son of Constantine. Though it might not be universally received, it appears to have been the reigning sentiment of the orthodox believers; and it seems so well adapted to the desires and apprehensions of mankind, that it must have contributed in a very considerable degree to the progress of the Christian faith." This, doubtless, is true, and it may be employed as a very powerful argument for the view which is here advocated, viz., that the history of Christianity was the proper result of the influence of Christianity itself. The religion which could, with the most decided force, appeal to the hopes and fears of mankind, vin-

dicates itself as the religion for mankind. It evinced its superiority to all the systems of heathenism, and to all the speculations of philosophers. The substance of what Christianity taught remains, while the exaggerations and misapprehensions of early Christians dropped away. It was not the false excrescences which wrought out the victory of the religion in the world, but the essential truth.

We now pass on to set beside this one great fact of the triumphant progress of Christianity, such other facts as may be brought into comparison with it, and to show that they, by way of contrast, confirm the unique character of the Christian victory. Here we may refer to the argument of Paley:[1] *Of the Religion of Mahommed.*—"The only event in the history of the human species which admits of comparison with the propagation of Christianity, is the case of Mahommedanism. The Mahommedan institution was rapid in its progress, was recent in its history, and was founded upon a supernatural or prophetic character assumed by its author. In these articles, the resemblance with Christianity is confessed. But there are points of difference which separate, we apprehend, the two cases entirely." These points of contrast Paley describes: 1. Properly speaking, Mahommedanism was not founded upon miracles, that is, proofs of supernatural agency capable of being known and attested by others. The miracles related centuries afterwards are not in point. Mahommed himself disclaimed miraculous power, although he declared that the Koran itself was a miracle. 2. The establishment of the two religions was by different means. The advance was slow for several years in the case of Mahommed. When Mahommedanism made rapid progress, it owed that progress to the power of fanaticism and the sword, as well as to the corrupt teaching of the Koran, which appealed to the worst passions of human nature. "We compare Jesus, without force, without power, without support, without one external circumstance of attraction or influence, prevailing against the prejudices, the

[1] "Evidences of Christianity," Pt. II. chap. ix. § 3.

learning, the hierarchy of His country, against the ancient religious opinions, the pompous religious rites, the philosophy, the wisdom, the authority of the Roman empire in the most polished and enlightened period of its existence, with Mahommed, working his way among Arabs, collecting followers in the midst of conquests and triumphs, in the darkest ages and countries of the world, and when success in arms not only operated by the command of men's wills and persons which attends prosperous undertakings, but was considered as a sure testimony of Divine approbation. That multitudes, persuaded by this argument, should join the train of a victorious chief; that still greater multitudes should, without any argument, bow down before irresistible power, is a conduct in which we cannot see much to surprise us, in which we can see nothing that resembles the causes by which the establishment of Christianity was effected." Moreover, we may fairly set over against the triumph of Mahommedanism the revelations of its history, which show that it has no such elevating and transforming power as Christianity. It is a waning and dying religion, but Christianity has never lost the sway which it obtained. It is subduing the world to itself.

Some of our modern opponents of Christianity have attempted to make much of the comparison with eastern religions, such as Buddhism and Confucianism. It cannot be denied that they number their adherents by hundreds of millions of the human race, but it cannot be shown that in their case there was anything like the victory of Christianity, where a doctrine, placed under every circumstance of disadvantage, by the sheer spiritual superiority which was in it, both endured against innumerable forms of opposition, and subdued to itself the adherence of the most advanced nations of the world. The Eastern religions are merely forms which heathen superstition and pantheistic mysticism and worldly indifference have assumed. There are portions of truth mingled with them; and in the case of the religion of Confucius, if religion it may be called, there are excellent moral maxims which adapt it to

the condition of a people whose main thought is the worship of earthly comforts and prosperity. But in all such systems there is no evidence of universal adaptation to the wants of men, nor can we conceive that they could have obtained supremacy over the Western mind. They still maintain their hold over millions, but it must be admitted that their prospect of endurance in the presence of an advancing Christianity is a very questionable one. We can conceive their remaining long, under the gloom of ignorance and a semi-barbaric state; but we cannot conceive their, in any way, being adapted to harmonize with the intellectual, social, and moral progress of the modern world.

But the triumphant progress of Christianity has been ascribed to causes external to itself. Such causes are said to prove that there is nothing supernatural, nothing which requires the admission of Divine authority, nothing which cannot be explained by the permanent intellectual, social, and moral forces which are at work in the world. There are some who, like the author of "*Supernatural Religion*," openly maintain that the morality of Christianity, stripped of its supernatural enforcement, is all that the world requires; and that that superior morality, which was taught and illustrated by Jesus Christ, sufficiently accounts for the past victory and present superiority of the Christian religion. But when we examine the facts, we are driven to the conclusion that, as a moral system alone, it would have remained utterly inadequate for the work which was given it to do. It conquered, not only by exhibiting a purer law of life and example of humanity, but by manifesting an invisible spiritual power, impelling, and guiding, and sustaining all men, of all classes and conditions, and under every variety of circumstances. "This new life," says Luthardt, "is capable of infusing itself into every phase of life, just because it is in its nature spiritual, and not merely any one special form of external life; it is equally able to assume the most opposite external appearances, and to enter into and become the soul of the most opposite kinds of life. What a variety of forms has

not Christianity assumed in different ages of the Church! During the first centuries, when it celebrated its triumphs in the sufferings of the martyrs and its rites in the obscurity of the catacombs; in the ages after Constantine, when it made the cross the banner of warlike hosts and the first jewel of crowns; in the middle ages, when from Rome it gave laws to the world, built its splendid cathedrals, and brought forth from its fertile bosom a rich world of poetry; in the Reformation period, when it awakened and comforted consciences by its earnest preaching of the Word and infused great spiritual life into the western world;—under all different aspects it has remained one and the same, and its witnesses in all ages are as intelligible to us, and awake within us as responsive an echo, as the preaching of to-day. And under what various forms do Christianity and the Church exist at the present day; under what various phases of manners and customs, of doctrine and worship, amidst the nations of the north and of the south, the civilized and the uncivilized! Yet, however various its forms, however diverse its relations, it is ever one and the same: the confession of faith in Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinful man." Such a religion is more than a moral system. It evinces its supernatural origin in the very fact of its absolute universality.

Let us look, then, at the *secondary causes*, on which so much stress is laid by those who would detract from the honour of Christianity itself. We shall confine our attention here to the two writers, *Gibbon* and *Renan*, as they represent the two schools of scepticism and positivism from which the resistance to the supernatural side of Christianity has mainly proceeded. *First*, let us put the case as the learned historian has described it, and see if he has extruded the supernatural.

Gibbon commences his "*candid and rational inquiry into the progress and establishment of Christianity*," with a statement of the broad fact, which is much larger than the explanation which he afterwards offers: "While that great body (the Roman empire) was invaded by open violence, or undermined by slow decay, a pure and humble religion gently insinuated

itself into the minds of men, grew up in silence and obscurity, derived new vigour from opposition, and finally erected the triumphant banner of the cross on the ruins of the Capitol." The primary causes of this triumph being put aside as beyond the province of the "*historian*," five secondary causes are enumerated as follows :—

1. The inflexible, and, if we may use the expression, the intolerant zeal of the Christians, derived, it is true, from the Jewish religion, but purified from the narrow and unsocial spirit, which, instead of inviting, had deterred the Gentiles from embracing the law of Moses.

2. The doctrine of a future life, improved by every additional circumstance which could give weight and efficacy to that important truth.

3. The miraculous powers ascribed to the primitive Church.

4. The pure and austere morals of the Christians.

5. The union and discipline of the Christian republic, which gradually formed an independent and increasing state in the heart of the Roman empire.

Now it will be evident that these, so-called, *secondary* causes embrace much of the very substance of Christianity; as, *e.g.*, immortality, miraculous power, pure morality, the Christian Church. It seems a strange mode of reasoning to distinguish such influences from "*the doctrine itself*." But how does Gibbon deal with these various causes?

1. The substance of the Jewish religion he admits to have been preserved in Christianity, while all that was narrow and unsocial was laid aside, the large and cosmopolitan spirit of the gospel being substituted for it. He enumerates some of the corruptions of primitive Christianity: the Judaistic party, which gradually lost its position, and was at last entirely separated from the purer and loftier Church; the Gnostics, who, combining speculation and rationalistic freedom with the doctrines of the gospel, formed a spurious Christianity, which obtained great influence, especially among the more cultivated classes, but eventually died away. The Christians, it is ad-

mitted, were exceedingly averse to all contact with idolatry, and intolerant of all heathenism. And yet this doctrine, anti-Jewish, anti-pagan, anti-philosophical, prevailed. It is suggested, that the secondary cause of this prevalence was, that while the Gentiles were repelled by the Jews they were invited by the Christians, but the circumstances were certainly not favourable to the success of the Christians. The doctrine came in a Jewish dress, and was first preached by Jews. It made no compromise with heathenism, but entirely denounced all that heathenism favoured. How, then, did it prevail, except by the inherent strength of its own proclamation? If it be suggested that the first Christians were mostly imperfect believers, and became nominal adherents of the new religion while retaining much of their old faith and manners, that would only show that Christianity, instead of being helped from without, was rather weakened by a body of insincere friends. And yet it endured and triumphed. Had not the substance of the religion been Divine, how could it have maintained itself, notwithstanding all such corruptions, and in spite of so many excrescences? It is difficult to see that such considerations as Gibbon sets forth at all touch the main point, "*the convincing evidence of the doctrine itself.*" Paley[1] has shown that the preachers of Christianity had to contend with prejudice, backed with power, among the Jews themselves, and had nothing to favour them among the heathen, for they were opposed by the *religion*, by the *philosophy*, and by the *political power* of those among whom they taught. Nor can we say that the general disbelief in the popular mythology was a protection to them, for even in the time of so philosophical an emperor as M. Aurelius they were persecuted, and "the younger Pliny, polished as he was by all the literature of that soft and elegant period, could gravely pronounce the monstrous judgment, 'Those who persisted in declaring themselves Christians I ordered to be led away to punishment (that is, to execution), for *I did not doubt*, whatever it was that they confessed, that

[1] "Evidences of Christianity," Part I. chap. 1.

contumacy and inflexible obstinacy ought to be punished.'" To allege the *zeal and steadfastness* of the Christians as a *secondary* reason for the triumph of their religion, is to put a secondary reason in the place of a *primary*. They were zealous and steadfast because their religion was fitted to triumph; it triumphed by its own power, not by their manifestation of the power. It is perfectly true that Christianity was a republication, in a purer form, of much that was in Judaism, but it is not true that the triumphs of Christianity were, in any measure whatever, due to the national characteristics of Jews. The records preserved to us in the Acts of the Apostles are quite sufficient to show that the gospel triumphed in spite of the Jews, and that those Jews who were used as instruments of the triumph, laid aside much of their Jewish character for the sake of the gospel.

2. Next, we are told that the Christian preachers *worked upon hopes and fears* of a world full of *superstition* among the less educated classes, and among the educated, of the *despondency* produced by failure to establish anything certain by philosophical speculation. We are reminded how Plato, and the philosophers who trod in his footsteps, were quite unable by their metaphysics to effect anything more than a "faint impression soon obliterated by the commerce and business of active life." "We are sufficiently acquainted with the eminent persons who flourished in the age of Cicero and of the first Cæsars, with their actions, their characters, and their motives, to be assured that their conduct in this life was never regulated by any serious conviction of the rewards and punishments of a future state." And as to the popular religions: (1) The general system of mythology was unsupported by any solid proof. (2) The truth itself "the most congenial to the human heart," was oppressed and disgraced by the absurd mixture of the wildest fictions. (3) Devout polytheists scarcely regarded a future state as a fundamental article of faith. Again, we are reminded that among the Jews there was obscurity on the subject, the distinct doctrine of immortality being introduced by

tradition of the Pharisees at a late period. "It was necessary that the doctrines of life and immortality, which had been dictated by nature, approved by reason, and received by superstition, should obtain the sanction of Divine truth from the authority and example of Christ." We are then led off into a rambling notice of the errors on the subject of the coming of Christ and the Millennium among the early Christians, and of the extravagant denunciations of Divine wrath upon the heathen by such vapid rhetoricians as Tertullian, which is entirely irrelevant to the argument. It is admitted that where polytheism and philosophy utterly failed, Christianity succeeded, and then we are asked to believe that it was not so much to be ascribed to the power of the truth and to the exemplification of that truth among believers, as to the wild fears of the multitude excited by the extravagant proclamations of the Christians. The simple reply to these *sceptical insinuations*, for Gibbon has not the manliness to charge home his argument in a direct manner, is to point to the testimony of the *first* century. Apostles certainly did not preach extravagantly, nor was their message addressed to the fears of the people. The reception of the truth was large, but not, as Gibbon would lead us to suppose, in the manner of a panic produced among the heathen. It was the gradual persuasion of men's minds. "*The foolishness of preaching*" was the chosen instrument. There may be some plausibility in Gibbon's suggestion when we come to the second century, for then Christianity was embraced by so many that, as he says, "the polytheist's fears might assist the progress of his faith and reason; and if he could once persuade himself to suspect that the Christian religion might possibly be true, it became an easy task to convince him that it was the safest and most prudent party that he could possibly embrace." But although that might apply to the time when Christianity was visibly obtaining the superiority, it certainly could not to the first century, to the time when to be a Christian was to be exposed to constant danger and at times to the fiercest persecution.

3. We pass on to the question of *the miraculous gifts ascribed to the Christians*, which, the historian says, "must have conduced to their own comfort and very frequently to the conviction of infidels." Here the reasoning is strangely inconsistent. In a spirit of satirical mockery, the accounts of the early Church are referred to as manifestly unworthy of credit, and the difficulty is pointed out of drawing the line of demarcation between the period of true miracles and the period of fanatical invention and fraud. "Whatever era is chosen, the death of the apostles, the conversion of the Roman empire, or the extinction of the Arian heresy, the insensibility of the Christians who lived at that time will equally afford a just matter of surprise. They still supported their pretensions after they had lost their power. Credulity performed the office of faith; fanaticism was permitted to assume the language of inspiration, and the effects of accident or contrivance were ascribed to supernatural causes." But the question is not, whether faith degenerated into credulity,—no one denies that it did so in the early Church,—but whether the faith of the apostles and of the earliest believers was genuine and well founded. Here the argument of Mr. Isaac Taylor, in "The Restoration of Belief," may be applied, showing that all the references in the New Testament to the miraculous are absolutely inconsistent with the supposition that the apostles were credulous and superstitious; the credulity could never have arisen at all, unless there had been an antecedent faith of which it was the degenerate form. In other words, we must first grant to Christianity its virtual triumph, before we can adduce the instances of the perversion of that triumph. It is certain, that if the apostles had put before the world no better miracles than those of the Fathers of the second century they would never have won the place they did for the Christian religion.

4. Scepticism has a very hard knot to deal with when it examines *the virtues of the primitive Christians* in the dim light of doubt. "It was very justly supposed that the Divine persuasion which enlightened or subdued the understanding, must,

at the same time, purify the heart and direct the actions of the believer." Not only so, but the New Testament distinctly connects the moral power of Christianity with its doctrine. "Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John iii. 3). It was one of the sternest battles which apostles and their immediate successors had to fight, that the doctrine might not be dishonoured by an empty profession. It is an undoubted fact that the earliest churches were the strictest in discipline, and that the relaxation of the discipline was a sequel to the triumph of Christianity, not its cause. Although there are many dark blots on ecclesiastical history, the characters and lives of the earliest Christian leaders are above suspicion. Strangely enough, we are reminded of the severity of the Church's rules, and the contrast between the Christian life and the life of the heathen world, and yet that contrast is supposed to have contributed to the spread of Christianity as a secondary cause! One would have thought that if the action of mere worldly motives is alone to be considered, everything would be against the adoption of such a system as the Christian Church established. It restrained national impulses, threw a shadow upon civil obligations, and involved the believer in a life of seclusion, self-denial, and suffering. And yet, though "*principles of human nature, the love of pleasure and the love of action*," were offended by the Christian rules of life, still Christianity prevailed, and we are asked to believe that it was greatly owing to a general awe and astonishment produced on the minds of the multitude, who, under a sense of sin and fear of punishment, were ready to bow before the sublime superiority of the Christian doctrine! Flimsy reasoning of this kind will never satisfy any but the mind which is already disposed to doubt. Had Christianity not been true, it could not have been the basis of a society distinguished, in a corrupt age of the world, for its moral purity and strength. Had the heathen pressed into the Church, influenced only by such motives as Gibbon describes, the mass of Christians would have soon so disgraced the Christian

name that it would have been cast out with scorn, even by heathens. That there were many false professors among the Christians, was a necessary result of the rapid advance of the truth; but again, it must be maintained against the historian, that he deals with a state of things subsequent to the virtual triumph of Christianity; therefore, what he alleges as a secondary *cause* of that triumph, is really more correctly to be described as an *effect*.

5. The last of the list of causes is *the growth of ecclesiastical government*. Gibbon recounts the familiar story, the gradual extinction of the primitive independence and freedom of the Church, as it grew in numbers, wealth, and influence over towns and districts. The presbyterian episcopacy of the first age became the more ambitious rule of presidents of presbyteries, presidents of councils, presidents of metropolitan churches, until the pre-eminence of Rome asserted itself in the usurpation of the Roman Pontiff. Then followed the distinction of clergy and laity; the power of ecclesiastical charity; and the "well tempered mixture of liberality and rigour, the judicious dispensation of rewards and punishments, according to the maxims of policy as well as justice, constituted the *human* strength of the Church." Doubtless Gibbon is right in ascribing much of the power of the Church during the middle ages, indeed from the time of Constantine, to the growth of ecclesiastical government, to the natural superiority which the masses of the people easily recognised in the clergy and Church rulers; but to bring this forward as an explanation of the triumph of Christianity is simply to throw dust into the eyes of his readers. Such an ecclesiastical government could never have been established at all unless faith had prepared the way for it. There were many faults, both in the writers and in the rulers of the Christian Church, during the second and third centuries; patent faults they are, dishonourable to Christianity; but to ascribe the success of the religion to the faults is poor logic. Much more reasonable it is to see in them the natural working, in imperfect human nature, of a sense of superiority. There are

many preparations, doubtless, which, as Gibbon has pointed out, contributed to the rapid spread of the Christian religion, such as the state of the Roman empire, and the decay of polytheism ; but those preparations, as we shall see presently, were themselves evidences, taken in connection with the facts of Christianity itself, that it was divinely foreseen and authorized.

In concluding his celebrated fifteenth chapter, the historian sneeringly alludes to the low social and intellectual rank of the first Christians, and to the fact that many of the highest minds among the heathen rejected the Christian faith and records. Celsus had made the same objection long before. It simply helps us to see the wonderfulness of the Christian triumph. It was distinctly predicted by the Lord, who gave thanks that the mysteries of the kingdom were hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes. Certainly the testimony of Gibbon himself, and the utter failure of philosophers, which he very candidly sets forth in the most decided language, may well explain why Christianity made no great advance among the cultivated and learned classes. In all ages such men are the victims of prejudice, of their own theories and speculations. They are not open to teaching. Socrates himself found that he could not convince the wise men of Athens that they were fools, and yet the oracle of Delphi proclaimed him the wisest of all, because he knew that he knew nothing.

Reviewing Gibbon's argument as a whole, we find that it is a shallow attempt to evade the force of the primary causes of the facts. Christianity triumphed because it was fitted to triumph. It took up into itself the best points of Judaism, and purified and ennobled them in a more spiritual system. It proclaimed immortality and eternal life, and, upon the foundation of the great facts of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, it built up an entirely new doctrine of the future life, clear of the old superstitions, and full of a certainty, and definiteness, and practical application, such as were altogether wanting in the case of heathen religions and

the philosophies which were attached to them. It boldly announced its dependence upon the supernatural. It put miracles in the very forefront of its sacred writings. It established itself by the help of miracles wrought in the name of Jesus Christ, and by His power as a risen Saviour. And the miracles, which alone were admitted into the record, of the first triumphs of Christianity, are quite in harmony with those which belong to the very substance of Christianity itself, the miracles of Christ. The early Church, though it might and must fall below the standard of perfection in the Lord Himself, was certainly characterized by wonderful moral excellence, exhibited virtues,—such as humanity, brotherly love and self-denial, —such as were never even inculcated by heathen religions, generally speaking, and were certainly not practically cherished by them. Christianity began in a pure moral atmosphere ; if that purity was not maintained, it is an evidence that the religion itself is greater than its professors. The church life which sprang out of the first, simple elements, taking their origin in Christianity itself, was a very mingled life, and, when much developed in later times, was corrupt and perverted. But the fact remains, a Christian society was established in the world, and the main characteristics of that society were derived from the religion of Christ as He taught it, not from the unbelieving world. Thus, all five points to which the historian refers may be regarded, from the Christian's position, not as objections to his faith, but as wonderful confirmations of its supernatural authority.

The views of M. Renan have been already canvassed in a previous chapter. They have been put before the British public, in a very prominent manner, by the appointment of the eloquent Frenchman to deliver the Hibbert Lectures for 1880, when the subject selected was "The influence of the institutions, thought, and culture of Rome on Christianity and the development of the Catholic Church."[1] Substantially, the

[1] Published in French by Levy, Paris, 1880, and translated by Charles Beard, B.A. London : Williams & Norgate.

theory of the growth and triumph of Christianity, set forth in these lectures, is the same as that which M. Renan has expounded in his "*Histoire des Origines du Christianisme*;" but the main feature of that theory, the development of ecclesiastical Christianity out of Paulinism, is somewhat less prominent in the Hibbert Lectures, while the influence of Roman institutions in preparing the way for the spread of Christianity is largely dwelt upon. The first question which M. Renan attempts to answer is, "In what sense is Christianity the work of Rome?" "Rome," it is said, "exercised a decisive influence on the Church of Jesus." This influence, when it is explained, is shown to be entirely extraneous to the religion itself; for it was Judaism, out of which, M. Renan maintains, Christianity came, which was "precisely the religion Rome most hated and despised, the religion which, two or three times over, she believed that she had finally vanquished and supplanted by her own national worship." Although Christianity is represented as a reformed and purified Judaism, yet it is allowed that, in a Talmudic form, Judaism would never have obtained the power which prevailed over Rome. But the essential elements of Judaism, "its fertile principles of almsgiving and charity, its absolute faith in the future of humanity, the joy of heart of which it has always held the secret," are preserved in Christianity, "denuded only of the distinctive observances and features which had been invented to give a character of its own to the peculiar religion of the children of Israel." But, seeing that this denudation really meant the death of Judaism, and its resurrection in a totally new form, we may well ask M. Renan for an explanation of that wonderful change, and, at the same time, for a clear solution of the historical problem, how the religion, born in the very midst of Judaism, hated by Jews, and at first propagated in spite of the strenuous opposition of the Jewish nation, obtained so complete a mastery over the Gentile world. Evidently, it was not *as being Jewish*, for we cannot conceive the distinctively Jewish elements wielding any influence in Rome; it

must therefore be *as being adapted to human nature itself.* This M. Renan virtually admits, for he shows that there were wants in the Roman world which Rome itself could not supply, but which Christianity met.

While the state of the empire is sketched with far too light a touch on the less favourable aspects of Roman life and manners, and as much as possible is made of the few signs to be found of a lingering desire for a better state of things and a weariness of the old corruption, we are left to conclude, that if Christianity had not come to the rescue, there was sufficient vitality in the body of the Roman empire itself to throw off the decay. We are told, *e.g.*, that "*a great increase and deepening of religious sentiment was a consequence of the Roman peace established by Augustus. Augustus felt it.*" The proof of this deepening of religious sentiment is that "Augustus, though with some reserve, permitted himself to be worshipped in the provinces." The heathen systems, with some slight exceptions, such as the Mithraic worship, could not meet this prevailing religious sentiment. "The predestined religion was silently growing in Judea. What could have more astonished the most sagacious of the Romans, had it been told to them, or what could have disgusted them more? But in history incredible predictions have so often been accomplished, so often has sagacity been mistaken, as to warrant us, whenever we attempt to foretell the future, in paying very little attention to the preferences or repulsions of what are called enlightened and sensible men." True, and when we are gravely told that this surprising victory, which no enlightened or sensible man would or could have anticipated, was due to merely natural causes, we remember M. Renan's sarcastic remark.

Now, if the state of mind among the Romans was so prepared for a new religion, in the reign of Augustus, how is it that, two generations subsequently, in the year 64 A.D., the violent and monstrously cruel persecution instigated by Nero could have been directed against those who preached what M. Renan says the people were longing to hear and ready to

welcome? Surely, in two generations, such a "deepening of religious sentiment" ought to have produced a very different result. The facts of the first propagation of Christianity at Rome entirely refute M. Renan's theory. They show that, instead of Rome being ready to receive the new religion with open arms, it was treated coldly by the Jews themselves, and won its way among the heathen only by the unobtrusive efforts of its messengers, and at first almost entirely among the poor and despised classes. M. Renan, like the historian Gibbon, conveniently ignores the mystery of the *first* success of Christianity. It may be admitted that very soon after that success it was materially influenced by the institutions, thought, and culture of Rome, and the primitive form of Christianity merged into the Catholicism of which, Renan rightly says, Rome became the capital. But we refuse to be blinded by this confusion of the facts of the first century with those of the second. The question which the apologist presses is, *not* why Christianity spread so rapidly when it became a Romanised religion and mingled with the imperial system, but why it succeeded in forcing its way from the obscurity of a Galilean village to the throne of the Cæsars, and especially why it was fitted to take the place of all the decaying systems of heathenism, and, as M. Renan puts it, "answered to the cry of all tender and weary spirits." To this no satisfactory answer is given. We are referred to Judaism, and to the Pauline expansion of its essential elements, but Judaism itself claims to be of Divine origin, and rests quite as much as Christianity on the supernatural. The history of the Apostle Paul and of his preaching can never be explained on mere naturalistic principles. Certainly, the school of Baur, of which M. Renan is a disciple, have entirely failed to prove that it was by mere ecclesiastical influences that the early Church delivered itself from the Judaistic spirit, which would have narrowed the sphere of the gospel, and stifled the rising life of the new religion. What we clearly recognise in the first century is a struggle between two principles, the principle of spiritual liberty and universal love, represented mainly by

the apostle Paul and his writings ; and the spirit of Pharisaism, formalism, religious bondage, and national prejudice, represented, not by apostles at all, but by a party in the early Church which falsely claimed apostolic support and perverted apostolic teaching. That the gospel triumphed, was due simply to its own inherent strength, backed by the manifested Divine authority which accompanied its proclamation. Until M. Renan has boldly faced the facts of the first century, he has really done nothing to explain the triumph of Christianity. We may go further than that, and say, until M. Renan has studied Christianity itself at its source and in its own character, he is entirely unfitted to deal with the facts of its propagation. The series of books which he has written on "*The Origins of Christianity*," while they give evidence of a large amount of reading, in ecclesiastical history and remains, betray a lamentable ignorance of the New Testament itself, and a perverse dogmatism in the criticism of early Christianity, which detract much from the value of a laborious and brilliant work. He tells us that "*History is his passion*," and that "*well written history is always good*" ; but it must be written with much more candour and thoroughness than M. Renan has displayed, before it can satisfy the demand of the truthful and earnest mind. The verdict of the *historian*, Christianity will never shrink from ; but the strange admixture of theory, romance, and research which is substituted for history in M. Renan's pages, will certainly shake the confidence of none but of those who already lend the sceptical writer a more than willing ear, by their sympathy with his positivism and by their revolt from all definite faith. It is melancholy to see an acute and learned mind attempting to understand the progress of the greatest religion of the world's history with no other moral preparation than the vague confidence which he has expressed in the following words :—"One thing alone is certain, the Fatherly smile which every now and then gleams through Nature, bearing witness that an Eye looks down upon us, that a Heart follows us."

III. *The providential preparations for the progress and triumph of Christianity, are themselves evidences of its supernatural origin.*

This is a branch of the argument which, in a hand-book, cannot be more than sketched, and that very briefly. If there are certain historical facts beyond dispute, and the Christian religion, when it came forth before the world, was adapted to those facts, in such a manner that a speedy and vast success of the new faith was the result, then it must be admitted that, either the religion was itself the outcome of the previous state of things by natural causes, or a supernatural anticipation of the facts must be presupposed. The harmony can scarcely be denied. Is it to be regarded as a "*pre-established harmony*"? that is, pre-established by Him who alone could foresee the course of history? or, shall we say that this wonderful success of Christianity was due to a fortunate coincidence, the religion exactly adapted to the state of the world, by chance happening to come forth out of the obscurity of a Jewish sect, and being at once recognised as the religion suited to the crisis, by the world? The early history of Christianity indicates nothing that would deserve to be described as such a world-wide recognition of adaptation. On the other hand, it must be remembered that those who could intellectually examine the claims of the new religion, and who might be said to represent *the world*, both the secular authority which was in it, and the attitude of the old religions towards any new faith that might present itself, instead of at once recognising Christianity as adapted to be the dominant influence of the future, despised it as a religion of Jews and outcasts. It was by sheer conquest, achieved by its own inherent force, that Christianity took possession of mankind. "*Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble,*" accepted it at its first proclamation. It gained its position as a rooted faith in the world, in the lowest places, not in the highest. When it had effected a moral triumph in the conversion of the masses of the people, then, and then alone, the harmony becomes evident, between the course of things in

the region of the world outside the domain of faith and the progress of Christianity itself. The amalgamation of the Church and the State was not the result of a deliberate adoption of Christianity as the best of all religions; but it grew out of political necessities, which themselves were brought about by the gradual, but irresistible, progress of the new religion. In short, Christianity compelled the State against its will to adopt it; and the harmony between the working out of the history of secular affairs, and the progress of Christ's kingdom, could not have been foreseen by any merely human wisdom.

Dr. Bushnell has ably treated this subject in his little work, "*Nature and the Supernatural*," chapter xiii.: "*The world is governed supernaturally in the interest of Christianity.*" "If," says the writer, "we just glance along the inventory, so to speak, of the matters of the great world's history, recalling chapters by their titles, and only bearing in mind the relation of so many things to the central figure, Christ and His kingdom, we shall find that, in His glorious person, we get the key by which their mystery and meaning are solved, their practical harmony expounded. Thus we have the Jewish dispersion before Christ, in all the principal cities of the world, and the establishment there of the synagogue worship." "Next, we observe, that philosophy had just culminated among the Greeks and Romans, and was giving way as a force that is spent. The Sophists had run it into the ground." "At this time, too, the Greek tongue, which for ages to come was to be the general vehicle of thought and commerce between the peoples of the world, had become, to a great extent, the vernacular of the country, and a Gentile speech or medium was thus made ready to receive and convey the grace that is given to the Gentiles. The Romans, too, are now masters of the country, and the Roman empire, of which it is become an integral part, is well-nigh universal. When Christ, therefore, is crucified, it is, as it should be, the public act of the world, decreed by the Roman procurator in the name of the world. There is also now a more open state of society between the nations and races of

mankind, than was ever known before; because they are all, in fact, one empire. The apostles, therefore, may well enough go into all the world, as they are bidden, because the pass of a Roman citizen is good in all the world." And so, it may be said, that the time of general peace was prepared for Christ, that the proclamations of the gospel might be the better heard. "Take now these familiar facts; and what are they all but a visible preparation of human history for Christ, showing on how vast a scale the world is managed in the interest of Christ and His supernatural advent? Why else, too, do they all concur in time, when they might as well have happened centuries apart? Whence comes it that, when human history has been brewing at so great a ferment for so many ages, all these great preparations should just now be ready, calling for the King with their common voice, and saying, '*The fulness of time is come*'?" "What are we to see in the simple Anno Domini of our dates and superscriptions, but that, for some reason, the great world-history has been bending itself to the lowly person of Jesus, from the hour of His miraculous advent, onward through so many centuries of time? The Christian era! a new formation, speaking geologically, in the domain of human life and society. Christ, who is called by many the impossible, the incredible person, the gospelled carpenter, raised into a mythic divinity;—to Him it is that the great world has so long bent itself and dated its history from His year! So clearly is it signified, that the government of the world is waiting on Christianity, and working in its interests; and is thus, in highest virtuality, a supernatural kingdom."

Jesus Christ, it has been well observed by Luthardt, is not the *product* of human history, but He is its *requirement*. With respect to His nature and origin, He is the *supernatural* close of that history; with respect to His historical position, its *natural* close. "He is, so to speak, the filling up of the void which the history of mankind had left, but which it was unable from its own resources to fill." "The very thought of mankind as a great unity—the thought, moreover, of one religion for all, a

universal religion; of one flock, which was to include all nations, every variety of nationality, of position in life, of degree in education; the thought of the Church as we have it and know it, was the grandest thought ever conceived or expressed by a man. The very thought was itself a miracle, its realization the very greatest of miracles; the permanent, ever-present miracle, compensating us for the absence of all others, conceivable only through what Jesus added, that His apostles should be endued with power from on high, and through what St. Luke relates in the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles, that the Spirit of God came upon them, and made them other men, enabling them, in the power of this new Spirit, to conquer the world, and to erect a kingdom, which, being founded, not like the kingdoms of the old world, by means of natural, though unusual power, but erected by the word of God's Spirit, is to endure for ever."[1] (See also Schaff's "History of the Apostolic Church,"[2] where the state of the Jewish and heathen worlds, as preparatory to Christianity, is fully described.) "The world had been preparing for Christianity in every way, positively and negatively, theoretically and practically, by Grecian culture, Roman dominion, the Old Testament revelation, the amalgamation of Judaism and heathenism, the distraction and misery, the longings and hopes, of the age; but no tendency of antiquity was able to generate the true religion, or satisfy the infinite needs of the human breast."

Some of our modern writers would disguise this fact of the world's helplessness at the time when Christianity appeared, but the Christian apologist must press it as an evidence of the adaptation of the religion of Christ to the needs of mankind, which bespeaks its supernatural origin. It is well to remember that in the three main features of the triumph which Christianity obtained, we can conceive of nothing which would have dispensed with that triumph, nothing by which the world could have recovered itself from its ruin, without the intervention of

[1] "Lectures on Fundamental Truths of Christianity," pp. 235–6.
[2] Introduction, §§ 39–53.

the new faith. These main features of the supremacy of Christianity are : its substitution of a *pure worship* for the degraded system of Paganism, its *renovation of society* through the associated life of the Christian Church, its rescue of the *human mind* from the extremes of utter slavery and licentious speculation. At the close of the first century it is impossible to point to any living forces from which a hope of recovery might be looked for, in any of these respects, except such as gathered about Christianity and its propagation. Take, *e.g.*, the *religious* aspect of the world at that time. It is admitted by all, even by opponents of Christianity, that the Roman spirit of indifference to positive religion, and patronage of all forms, the international religious compromise which was witnessed in the vast assemblage of deities in the Pantheon, and the general tolerance of widely different modes of worship, were the result of a rapid decay of heathenism, of the polytheistic ideas which lay at the root of it, a negative, though not a positive, rejection, of the old superstitions and follies. An attempt made by the apostate Julian, A.D. 361–363, to resuscitate Paganism, would probably have failed as thoroughly as it did, had it been made a century and a half before it *was* made. We cannot conceive of any reformation of polytheism being effected, nor of any substitution of a philosophical religion for that which was losing its hold upon the more intelligent of the people. The masses would never have received it. The reformers would have found no sufficient force of motive, impelling them to work against the dead weight of indifference which would oppose them. But it has been suggested, that there was a *monotheism* ready to take the place of the dead *polytheism*, in the ancient Judaism. We need only separate from that old Judaism its surrounding corruptions, and set it free from its bondage of forms and rites, to find in it a living force sufficient to renovate religion. As a matter of fact, the Christian religion came out of the bosom of the Jewish, but it was by no natural process. Whence arose the spirit of life in that dead body of Judaism? Certainly not in the natural course of Jewish observance, not in the Jewish

schools, not in the ordinary Jewish life. We must explain Jesus and His new society, appearing in the midst of Judaism, and yet "*despised and rejected*" by Judaism, as it then was, before we can dispense with the supernatural. There was as little hope to be found in the old Judaism as in the old Paganism. Both were dead. The power of a new life, which manifested itself in Christianity, requires the reference to a new cause. Many of the elements existing both in the Pagan and in the Jewish world, were incorporated into Christianity; but the power which gathered them to itself, and gave them an entirely new form of operation, was certainly no power that we can recognise, as a living energy, either in the corrupt religion of the heathen, or in the dead formalism of the Jew. We cannot further pursue this argument. The relations of primitive Christianity to the Jewish and Gentile worlds are full of inexplicable facts. A candid mind must see in them, at least, a presumption in favour of the view set forth in the Scriptures. We may fairly challenge those who deny the possibility of the supernatural, to give any rational, naturalistic, explanation of successes, both in the sphere of Pagan superstition and in that of Jewish prejudice, so rapid and immense.

IV. *The ecclesiastical Christianity which prevailed during the middle ages could not have obtained the supremacy it did obtain, unless it had been preceded by an earlier form of Christianity, which came forth from, and bare witness to, the scriptural records.*

This needs little to be said in its support. The corruptions which the ecclesiastical historian recounts, deplorable as they are, are yet traceable to causes entirely independent of the origin of the Christian religion itself. It was not by "*ecclesiastics*," by priests, by political churchmen, by fanatical zealots, that the religion of Christ was founded. When the primitive Church had by spiritual forces triumphed over the world, then the growing power of ecclesiastical persons was no longer to be ascribed to the same causes; it was not spiritual, but the evil fruit of a compromise between the spiritual and the secular. The middle age domination of Christianity was not

the same thing as the apostolic victory, achieved in spite of opposition and through the humblest instruments. But the corruption could never have taken place had there not been previously the marvellous prosperity out of which it came. The principles of Christianity became united with a vast amount of extraneous and spurious matter, which served the purpose of ecclesiastical system and device; but notwithstanding that the original form of the religion was travestied, we may still maintain, there was evidence of a power and virtue in so much of the truth as remained, which proves that, had it been uncorrupted, it would have wrought still larger results, and brought forth fruits according to its nature. It may be questioned whether the chaotic forces of the middle ages would have shaped themselves into any order at all, but for the presence among them of the Christian Church, however far that Church had departed from the ideal of Jesus Christ. And it is a question whether the Church of that troublous time would not have been swept away and have left no trace behind, if it had not been the outcome of an earlier Church and had received from it a legacy of truth and custom, which still worked as a principle of life age after age, and which was so powerful that it could not be altogether annihilated even by the follies and compromises of those times. On this subject much may be gathered from Guizot's "Lectures on Civilization," and Kingsley's "Roman and Teuton."

V. *Taking our stand in the second century, and looking back from it to the beginning of the Christian era, it is impossible to doubt that the Scriptures as we now read them, with their supernatural facts, were the foundation on which the faith of primitive Christians was based.*

It is of no importance to the substance of this argument to be able to prove that every narrative which we find in the New Testament is an exact and unexaggerated account of what occurred in the history of our Lord. We are in possession of a number of patristic writings extending from the beginning to the end of the second century, in some cases,

perhaps, of doubtful authenticity, but, taken as a whole, forming a body of evidence, as to the belief of the Christian Church at that time, which cannot be gainsaid. The examination of these second century writings proves conclusively that the early Christians believed that their religion had a supernatural origin. The references to the facts of gospel history, where they are not actual quotations from our Gospels, confirm the chief points of the narrative as accepted generally by the Church. The existence at the same time of many apocryphal gospels, and of many legendary narratives, which have not been incorporated into our Scriptures, and which were evidently rejected by the Christian writers, proves that some discrimination was exercised in the selection of the facts to which authority was attached. The presence among the gospel narratives of the supernatural element was not the ground of that discrimination, but rather the character of the narratives themselves. Those which were rejected do not harmonize with those which were received. We may therefore conclude that a sober spirit of faith actuated the Church in the second century, and to that sober spirit of faith we appeal, as a reasonable warrant in accepting the testimony of the early Church. Prebendary Row has argued this point very fully in his Bampton Lectures (Lecture v., on "The evidence afforded by the writings of the Fathers who flourished between A.D. 90 and A.D. 180, that the Church was in possession of an account of the actions and teachings of our Lord analogous to that which is contained in our present Gospels"). The evidence, says Mr. Row, establishes conclusively the following points:—"*First*, That the traditions of the Church respecting the actions and teachings of our Lord, whether they existed in a written or an oral form, were, *at the conclusion of the first century*, substantially the same as those which we read in the Synoptics, the variations being so inconsiderable, that for historical purposes they may be safely disregarded. *Secondly*, If there was a different class of traditions floating about in the Church, and modelled on the conceptions involved in the stories contained in the apocry-

phal gospels, that the writers of this early Christian literature did not attach any value to them; and that they must have accepted the one as an account of the genuine actions and teaching of their Master, and rejected the other as a fabulous addition. From these two conclusions it follows :—

"*First:* That no legendary matter worthy of the notice of the historian, which was invented as late as the last ten years of the first century, has been incorporated into the narratives of the Synoptics.

"*Secondly:* That the traditions of the same period attributed to Jesus a number of miraculous actions, nearly all of them identical with, and all of them of the same character as, those in our Gospels, and wholly differing in type and conception from those which are narrated in the apocryphal ones.

"*Thirdly:* That the religious and moral teaching which these traditions attribute to Him, whatever slight variations it may have contained, is, for all practical purposes, the same as that which we read in the Synoptics.

"*Fourthly:* That if the narrative of the Synoptics consists of a mass of legendary matter, these legends must have grown up between A.D. 30 and A.D. 90, or during the sixty years which followed the conclusion of our Lord's ministry. This interval is covered by the Pauline Epistles."[1]

To these conclusions it must be added, that the faith and worship of the Christian Church itself involved the substance of the gospel history. Take, *e.g.*, the two sacraments of the Church, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. No one can deny that the writers of the second century bear abundant testimony to the existence of a Christian society constantly observing these two rites. There was a certain baptismal creed which was professed, and the baptism was itself a confession of faith in the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Had not the early Church believed in the superhuman character of Jesus Christ, how could it have maintained that confession? The communion of the Lord's Supper, which Justin Martyr describes in the most

[1] Pp. 283-4.

solemn manner, pointed, not only to the crucifixion, as a fact on which faith was built up, but to the resurrection and ascension, and to the prospect that Jesus Christ would reappear according to His promise. Irenæus and Tertullian in the third century describe the faith of the Church in words which substantially include all the chief miraculous facts of the Saviour's history. They would scarcely have ventured to do so had they not been repeating the traditional faith handed on to them from a previous generation. Their ground of confidence is, that they followed the *prescription* of the Church, and that they could allege that prescription against those who would pervert the doctrine of Christ. "It would have been in the highest degree difficult," says Mr. Row, "not to say impossible, during the brief interval between our Lord's ministry and the end of the first century, to have imposed on any community of Christians a mass of legendary matter of a character wholly different from those facts on the belief in which the Church was originally founded, and which formed the moving spring of the daily life of the individual members, and which many of them had accepted as the ground of their conversion. It is absolutely impossible that communities like the churches of the first century, living in a state of constant antagonism to their Jewish and Pagan neighbours, and having to justify to themselves the grounds on which they had abandoned their former beliefs, could have become oblivious of those facts which had induced them to accept Jesus as the Messiah, and which had ever since formed the foundation of their religious life. From these considerations it follows that the Church must have been possessed of a machinery for transmitting an account of the chief events of its Founder's life, which was incomparably superior to that of every other form of traditionary history. The difficulty, in itself insuperable, is greatly increased by the number of the Christian communities, and the wide extent of territory over which they were scattered. Even if we suppose such an imposition to have been possible in the members of a particular Church, it would have been

impossible to extend it to any considerable number of them." To these considerations it may be added, that while we might imagine, in the course of time, traditional exaggerations and supernatural elements of a mythical character interwoven in the gospel story, we cannot conceive that the Christian Church should invent, as an afterthought, that which would be necessary to give rise to the Church's faith as a whole. If we strip the gospel narrative of its leading miraculous elements, such as the incarnation, the resurrection, and the ascension (and if they are included they involve the superhuman character of the Lord's ministry), we have too narrow a basis left, in the merely human life and superior wisdom of the Lord, on which to build up, in a sound historical spirit, the superstructure which we know to have been existing in the Church of the second century. Either, therefore, the early Christians must have been themselves, virtually, the authors of their own Christianity, or we must seek for the origin of it in some such basis of fact as we find recorded in the Gospels. The character of the men was much too simple and devout to allow of the former of these alternatives being entertained by any candid mind. The motives for such an invention are wanting. The men believed because the facts impelled them to believe.

We are thus brought up to the main position of this historical argument.

VI. *Coming to the first century, and to the primitive faith, of which the corner-stone was the fact of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, such a faith can be placed at the beginning of such a history as that of Christianity, only on the ground of its being the faith of sincere, reasonable, truth-loving men, whose testimony to that primal fact is, under the circumstances, morally irresistible.*

With this branch of the argument we shall conclude our analysis. And this, being a very vital point of the Christian evidence, will require a somewhat fuller statement and consideration. The lectures on the Pauline Evidence and on the Theory of Visions, by Prebendary Row (Lects. vi. and vii.

with supplement, and remarks in preface on Dr. Carpenter's admissions), deal very ably and satisfactorily with the proof of the resurrection. The accounts which are given in the Gospels cannot be perfectly harmonized. But the existence of discrepancies is no invalidation of the narrative. The main question is, did the early Church believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and was it upon the foundation of that belief that they practically rested from the time of the apostolic preaching onwards? We have already shown that the evidence for the authority of the Gospels is amply sufficient. The account of the resurrection is certainly an integral part of the gospel history. But it is in the testimony of the Epistles that the main strength of the argument must be sought, especially as the genuineness of the Gospels is still a disputed point, whereas in the case of the four Epistles of St. Paul, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Romans, and Galatians, the highest critical authorities are agreed that no reasonable uncertainty can be any longer entertained. Although there may be doubt in some minds as to the Pauline authorship of other Epistles, and as to the apostolic authority of the rest of the New Testament, it must be admitted that the whole book is a reflection of the belief of the early Church. The writings which were ascribed to apostles must have been either forgeries or genuine. If the former, they must have obtained currency by their successful imitation of apostolic style and faithful representation of the Church belief and life of the time. We must refer the reader to the remarks of Mr. Isaac Taylor in his "Restoration of Belief," and to the chapter on miracles in this work, for an estimate of the character of the writers of the Epistles, as bearing on the value of their testimony. In the case of the Pauline Epistles, as Mr. Row remarks, "They place the sincerity of the writer beyond the power of question. The indications of this are stamped on every page. They vividly depict him in all the multiform aspects of his character. We have him before us in every alternation of feeling, in his disappointments, and in his hopes; when expostulating with opponents, and when

pouring out his whole soul to friends. Not only do they afford incontestable proof of the perfect sincerity of the writer, but they let us into the innermost secrets of his heart. All these traits impart to his testimony the highest value as historical evidence, affording as strong a guarantee of its truth as if we were able to place him in the witness-box and subject him to a rigid cross-examination." Now, apart from the evidence, which we certainly find in the Epistles, of miraculous power exercised by the apostles, which itself would carry the proof of a similar or greater power in Jesus Christ, "the Epistles furnish unquestionable proof, that at the time the apostle wrote, the Church was fully acquainted with an outline of the actions and the teaching of Jesus Christ; which was similar in its features to that which is contained in our present Gospels." The principal miracle of the gospel history is the resurrection. For a full statement of the argument on this point we must refer the reader to Mr. Row's volume. A brief summary is all that can be attempted in the few pages left to us.

I. It is evident that within one generation of the death of Christ the resurrection was accepted by every section of the Christian Church, including the Judaising opponents of St. Paul and the believers at Rome, in the formation of whose faith he had had no share.

II. The fact of the resurrection was a *primal fact*, on it the Church rested. It supported the Messianic claims of Jesus, His kingly authority, His risen power, His living presence in the Church, the duty of serving Him, and the faith in immortality and eternal life.

III. The Church was reconstructed on the basis of belief in the resurrection, and that immediately after the crucifixion. Now as to the evidence itself, look at the following points:— 1. St. Paul at his conversion saw the risen Jesus, and always maintained afterwards that he saw Him. 2. The belief could not have arisen in anything else than the fact, for St. Paul had been a persecutor, and himself informs us that Jesus was

believed to have risen on the third day. 3. The references to those who opposed St. Paul's authority prove that they also believed, as he believed, that Jesus rose from the dead, and his challenge of those who did not believe, as heretics, points to the general acceptance of the resurrection. 4. St. Paul not only states the belief, but enumerates definite instances in which testimony was given to the fact. He was seen by St. Peter, by the entire apostolic body assembled together, by five hundred disciples at once, of whom more than half survived at the date of the letter (1 Cor. xv.), by St. James, by all the apostles, and, last of all, by St. Paul himself. We may test and confirm the statements in 1 Corinthians by those in Galatians, and by the reasoning which follows the statements in 1 Cor. xv. 13, etc. 5. The statements made by St. Paul are fully corroborated elsewhere in the New Testament, as in the Epistle of St. James and the Apocalypse, proving that the universal Church, without distinction of party, accepted the resurrection as constituting the basis on which it had been erected. Thus all mythic and legendary theories and similar evasions of the plain historical argument are excluded. "*The belief in the resurrection could not have grown up in the gradual manner in which ordinary fictions do, i.e., at a considerable distance of time and place from the occurrence of the supposed events; but, on the contrary, it originated at Jerusalem within a few days after the public execution of Jesus, and was immediately proclaimed as a fact by His followers; and the Church was reconstructed on its basis.*" No other account of the facts of the Christian history is worthy of a moment's notice. Unless we assume the truth of the resurrection, we can give no rational and consistent explanation of the origin of the Church, and especially of its construction on such a basis. To suppose an institution which has endured for more than eighteen centuries, and wrought such wonders in the world, having no better foundation than a mythical or legendary or fanatical one, is to suppose an absurdity. The case of Mahommedanism, as we have shown elsewhere, is really no parallel.

Whatever success was obtained by the Arabian prophet, was due, not to the visions which he is said to have had, but to a number of extraneous causes, such as the military prowess of his followers, and the corruption of the nations they subdued. There is no parallel in the history of the world to the triumph of Christianity.

"Modern unbelief has fully admitted the necessity of some rational and philosophical solution of the unquestionable facts of history. It denies that Jesus ever rose from the dead. It affirms that the belief in His resurrection originated in the hallucination of His followers." But in attempting to formulate this theory of hallucination, it proves itself both unjust to the facts themselves, and unwilling to accept their fair and logical issues. The theory of visions, *i.e.*, that the first disciples were misled by subjective illusions, and thought they saw their Lord although He was not objectively before their eyes, is entirely overthrown by the fact that they received from the Lord, after He was risen, instructions at considerable length, whereby the Church was freshly constituted after the dispersion which took place at the crucifixion. Either they did receive those instructions, or they invented them and were mere impostors. In the latter case, how can we account for the growth of the Church, through the preaching of mere lying impostors? In the former case, how could they be deceived, as to the appearance of Jesus from the dead, when they talked with Him for many days, and maintained before the world that He was alive? There is another theory which has been put forth, viz., that "Jesus did not die of the wounds received in crucifixion, but recovered and retired from public view; and that this recovery and retirement were mistaken by His credulous followers for a resurrection and an ascension into heaven." But such a theory is so plainly a mere shift of a perplexed logic that it is unworthy of serious consideration. It assumes so much which is incapable of proof, and directly contradicted by plain statements of the gospel, that it may be said to be a mere blank challenge of Christianity itself, and therefore is

confronted with the whole body of Christian evidence. It would be a waste of time to deal seriously with such a subterfuge.

But the theory of visions or hallucinations has received some fresh support in our own time by some eminent men of the broad school of thinkers, notably by the remarkable book by Dr. Abbott, "*Philochristus*," and although equally incapable of rational support, requires a more definite refutation. Mr. Row has dealt with it in his sixth lecture. "In order to impart the semblance of plausibility to it," as he remarks, "it is necessary to assume, that the original followers of Jesus consisted of a body of men who were in the highest degree enthusiastic, credulous, and superstitious, whose enthusiasm created a number of visionary appearances of Jesus risen from the dead, and whose credulity mistook them for external realities," and in the case of St. Paul, "that he had been wrought up to so high a degree of enthusiastic exaltation, that he was unable to distinguish between his own subjective imagination and the realities of the external world." These presuppositions of the theory cannot be maintained. They are entirely against the evidence of the Epistles, and the history of the first century. Had the basis of Christianity been so unsubstantial, the watchful and acute adversaries, both among the heathen and among the Jews, would soon have swept it away, nor could it have survived more than a few years. Besides, there remains to be accounted for the whole body of posthumous commandments which the apostles received from the Lord, which they would not have dared to ascribe to Him unless they had received them directly from Him, and which they would not have received in visions.

Again, the historical proof of the theory utterly fails. 1. The belief in the resurrection starts at the point of the fact itself. The disciples were *not* in a state of mind to have visions of what they did not expect, and could hardly believe even when it was testified. 2. Taking the criteria of Dr. Carpenter, the three principles which we must suppose at work in

the case of subjective hallucination, viz., prepossession, fixed idea, and expectancy, they do not apply to the resurrection. It took the disciples by surprise. 3. The very distinct character of the belief in the resurrection must be remembered. It was not the belief in an ordinary ghost story, or reappearance of a dead person, but was the basis on which rests all the operation of Christianity as a living power since that time, creating the catholic Church, and all that has been the outcome of its existence. 4. The resurrection is morally true, as well as historically attested. It is requisite to complete Christianity as a moral scheme. Without it all the other facts are defective. 5. The resurrection, when it was first reported, could have been subjected to the test of verification, by the simple production of the Saviour's body, by those who denied its reality. 6. There is no support for such a theory to be found in the altered form of Jesus and His not being recognised. Jesus did not rise to die again. He rose with an immortal body (see Westcott's "Gospel of the Resurrection"). "It is not only in the highest degree probable, I may say, it is certain, if the resurrection was an objective reality, that the body in which Jesus rose from the dead would have undergone some species of transformation from that which he wore previously to His crucifixion. If the evangelists had asserted that there was no difficulty in recognising Him, it would have cast suspicion on their entire narrative. But if the belief in the resurrection had been the result of mistaking subjective impressions for objective realities, the last thing which would have occurred to them would have been to attribute an altered appearance to their risen Master. Neither unconscious cerebration, fixed idea, prepossession, nor expectancy, can account for so remarkable a fact."

We cannot conclude this notice of the theory of visions without a reference to the remarkable testimony of Dr. Carpenter, certainly one of the ablest and most candid scientific observers and thinkers, and a diligent student of the facts of mental physiology. He has admitted, as Mr. Row states in

his interesting preface to a new edition of his Bampton Lectures,[1] that he is compelled to make a distinction between the evidence for the resurrection and that for any other miracle of the New Testament, though it is difficult see how that will help the scientific objector to get rid of the supernatural. The greater proves the less. The resurrection carries with it all the miracles of the gospel history in proving the supernatural. The following are the words of Dr. Carpenter :—"I regard the historical evidence of the resurrection as standing on a far wider basis than the historical evidence of any single miracle of the New Testament." "Looking at the unquestionable fact (for such it appears to me) that the resurrection of our Lord was the foundation of the preaching of Paul, and, so far as we know, of the other apostles, and was universally accepted by the early Church as the cardinal doctrine of Christianity ('If Christ be not risen, then is your faith vain'), the gospel narratives derive from that fact a support that is given to none other of the miracles either of Christ or of His followers. I regard the life and teachings of Christ as the highest *moral* revelation of the Divine mind that we possess, Nature being the highest intellectual revelation."

Without pushing the inconsistency of this position, the admission of the highest moral revelation in a narrative which was written by deluded men who were not true witnesses of what they narrate, it must be allowed, that if the resurrection is true and well attested, then the position of the scientific objector, which is one of entire rejection of whatever appears to be against the uniformity of Nature, is altogether invalidated. The *à priori* objections to miracles are gone. The way is open to appeal to the sublime character of the Christian truth and history, which rest upon the corner-stone of the resurrection

Our historical analysis has brought us up to a fundamental fact. In that fact, we maintain, is the whole substance of Christianity. The Messiahship of Jesus is there. The fulfil-

[1] Pp. viii., ix.

ment of prophecy, and confirmation of the Old Testament are there. The possibility, at least, is there, of all the miracles of the New Testament. The reconstitution of the Christian Church was on the basis of the Saviour's risen glory. On it rest the truth of the apostolical teachings, and their authority, as derived from the direct instructions of Jesus after His resurrection. The Divine seal was placed upon the doctrines of Christ and the hope of immortality. The renovation of the world was there, and the commencement of a new humanity in the second Adam, as we find taught by the apostle Paul. The superhuman origin of the Christian Church, and its perpetuation, are the outcome of a fact, which itself is of inexhaustible significance and altogether unique character, carrying with it the whole extent of a Christian's faith. In the words of Dr. Westcott, we say: "The gospel of the resurrection harmonizes in itself the objective and subjective elements of religion. It is sufficiently definite to take religion out of the domain of caprice, and rest its hopes upon a foundation external to the believer; and it is so far-reaching in its ultimate significance as to present itself to every age and every soul with a fresh power. It gives faith a firm standing ground in history, and at the same time opens a boundless vision of the future development of our present powers. It brings down dogma to earth, and then vindicates the infinitude of the issues of temporal existence. By the definiteness of its actual occurrence it gives dignity to all human action; by the universality of its import it lifts the thoughts of the believer from the man to the race and to the world. It stands, so to speak, midway between the seen and the unseen; it belongs equally to the spiritual and to the material orders, and it reconciles both; it gives immediate reality to the one by the manifestation of a human type; it ennobles the other by the revelation of a Divine presence. In both respects its teaching is essential to Christianity. Exactly in proportion as it is lost sight of in the popular creed, doctrine is divorced from life, and the broad promises of Divine hope are lost in an individual struggle after good." Such is

"the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. x. 8, 9). "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Tim. iii. 16). "Jesus Christ is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth." "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." "To Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

CHAPTER X.

THE LITERATURE OF APOLOGETICS.

IT may be useful to the student of Christian Evidences to give the titles of such works as have appeared in support of Christianity. Our space will not allow of a complete enumeration of them; but we place the following list before the reader as a help towards a more perfect classification of the literature of Apologetics. A few of the works more or less unfavourable to Christianity are mentioned, but it will be seen, at once, that they represent only a very small portion of the antagonistic writings. Our object has been rather to furnish the materials of study than to put forth an exhaustive catalogue.

During *the first three centuries* much was written in defence of Christianity which has perished. The following are the most important works which still remain and should be consulted :—

Justin Martyr (A.D. 89–163). Apology I., II. Dialog. cum Tryphone. Cohort. ad Græcos. Translations. Clark. Ante-Nicene Library. Oxford Library of the Fathers, 1861.

Tertullian (A.D. 160–240). Adversus Judæos. Adversus Marcionem. De Animâ. Adversus Valentianos. Apologia. Ad Nationes, Lib. II. De Testimonio Animæ. *See* Neander Anti-Gnosticus. Ante-Nicene Library.

Athenagoras. Apology (A.D. 177). De Resurrectione. Ante-Nicene Library.

Origen (A.D. 185–254). Contra Celsum. Ante-Nicene Library.

Minucius Felix (about A.D. 257–282). Octavius, a Dialogue between Cœcilius and Octavius, touching objections then made to Christianity. Ed. Lübkert. Leips., 1836.

Arnobius (about A.D. 300). Adversus Gentes. Ante-Nicene Library.

Lactantius (about A.D. 250–325). Divinæ Institutiones. Seven Books. An Introduction to Christianity, embracing preceding works. Ante-Nicene Library.

Clement of Alexandria and *Cyprian* should also be consulted.

During the same period appeared the antichristian works of *Celsus*, *Porphyry*, *Hierocles*, and, in the fourth century, *Julian*. Their attacks were met by Origen, Methodius, Jerome, Eusebius, Augustine, Apollinaris, and Cyril. Celsus's work, *The Word of Truth*, has been preserved only in fragments incorporated into Origen's reply. Porphyry's attack was made chiefly in a work entitled *Against the Christians*, which has perished. The general character of it, and some portions, are preserved to us in the replies of Eusebius, Apollinaris, and Methodius. Jerome refers to his attack on Daniel, in his commentary on that book, and describes his views generally, in his commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians. *See* also Holstenius, De Vita et Scriptis Porphyrii, c. x.

Hierocles' work was refuted in the writings of Eusebius and Lactantius, where it is described. The work itself has perished. The same fate has met that of *Julian* the Apostate. It is only known by the reply made to it by Cyril in his work "Against Julian," in ten books, A.D. 433.

From the Council of Nicæa, 325 A.D., *to Anselm*, A.D. 1034, the authority of the Church being more widely acknowledged, works of defence were less required. The following names, however, will direct the student to some valuable reading more or less apologetic. *Eusebius* of Cæsarea, *Cyril* of Jerusalem, *Jerome*, *Augustine*, *Boethius*, *Gregory the Great*, *John Scotus Erigena*. (*See* Th. Christlieb. Lehre und Leben des Scotus Erigena in ihrem Zusammenhang mit der vorhergehenden und unter Angabe ihrer Berührungspuncte mit der neueren Philosophie und Theologie. Gotha, 1860). *Abelard's* Sic et Non. *See* also Hampden's Bampton Lectures: On the Scholastic Philosophy considered in relation to Christian Theology, 1837; and Maurice's History of Philosophy.

During the Middle Ages the chief works are those of *Agobard* of Lyons (De Insolentiâ Judæorum, 822); *Abelard* (Dialogus inter Philosophum Judæum et Christianum); *Thomas Aquinas* (De Veritate Catholicæ Fidei contra Gentiles).

From the 14th to the 16th centuries appeared the works of *Petrarch* (Opp. de otio religiosor.). *Raimund* (Theologia Naturalis, translated into French by Montaigne). *Æneas Sylvius*. *Ficinus* (De Religione Christiana et fidei pietate, 1450. Works. Paris, 1641. Vol. i. pp. 1–73). *Alphonso de Spina* (Fatalitium Fidei contra Judæos, 1487). *Savonarola* (Triumphus crucis seu de verâ Fide, 1497. *See* Rudelbach's Monographie, p. 367, etc., Villari's Life), *Pico di Mirandola*. *Ludovicus Vives* (De Veritate Christianâ, 1551), and *Mornæus* (De Veritate Religionis Christianæ adv. Atheistas, Epicurœos, etc., 1580).

For further information on the history and literature of apologetics, the following works may be consulted: Farrar's Critical History of Free Thought, Tzchirner's Geschichte der Apologetik. Leips., 1805. Van Senden, 1841. Clausen, Apologetæ Ecc. Chr. ante-theodosiani, 1817. Stein, Die Apologetik des Christenthums. Dr. A. Clarke, Succession of Ecclesiastical Literature, 1832. North British Review, No. 30. August, 1851.

The really active period of attack and defence commenced with the sixteenth century. We may refer the reader for the earlier writings to the elaborate work of the Abbé Migne: Demonstrations Evangeliques, in twenty vols, 4to. The following names appear in these volumes with others, the titles of whose works are given in the subsequent catalogue: Montaigne, Bacon, Descartes, Richelieu, Arnauld, Du Choiseul de Plessis, Praslin, Pascal, Pelisson, Nicole, Bossuet, Bourdaloue, Louie, Malebranche, Leibnitz, La Bruyêre, Fénelon, Huet, Daguet, Leclerc, Du Pin, Jacquelot, De Haller, Le Moine, L. Racine, Massillon, D'Aguesseau, De Polignac, Saurin, Buffier, Tournemine, Seed, Fabricius, De Bernis, Para de Phanjas, Stanislas, Turgot, Blauzée, Bergiers, Gordil, Bonnet, De Crillon, Euler, Delamarre, Caraccioli, Duhamel, S. Liguori, Bullet, Vauvenargues, Guénard, De Pompignan, De Luc, Du Voisin, De la Lazerne, Schmitt, Pointer, Silvio Pellico, Lingard, Brunati, Manzoni, Perrone, Lambruschini, D'orléans, Campien, Fr. Pérennès, Marcel de Serres, Dupin Ainé, Gregory XVI., Cattet, Sabatier, Bolgeni, Chassay, Lombroso, Ansoni.

We now proceed to give a catalogue of works of more or less value for study. We have not included complete lists of series, such as the Boyle Lectures, the Bridgwater Treatises, and the Bampton Lectures. The titles of these can be easily obtained, and they vary considerably in value. Of the Boyle Lectures, the following may be mentioned: Bentley, 1692; Kidder, 1694; Williams, 1695; Gastrell, 1697; Stanhope, 1701; Clarke, 1794–5; Denham, 1711; Ibbott, 1713; Gurdon, 1721; Berriman, 1730; Worthington, 1766; Owen, 1769. Of the Bridgwater Treatises,—those of Chalmers, Kidd, Whewell, Roget, Bell, Buckland, Kirby, Prout, and Babbage.

The titles of the more important works to the modern student are printed in italics.

Grotius (Hugo). De Veritate Religionis Christianæ. 1627.

Limborch. De Veritate Religionis Christianæ amica collatio cum erudito Judæo. Gonda, 1687; Basle, 1740.

Hakewell (G., D.D.). Apology; or, Declaration of the Power and Providence of God in the Government of the World. Oxford, 1635.

Boyle (Hon. Robert). The Christian Virtuoso. 1690. Discourse of Things above Reason. 1681. Free Inquiry into the vulgarly received notion of Nature. 1685–6. Excellency of Theology compared with Natural Philosophy. 1674. Some Considerations touching the Style of

the Holy Scriptures. 1668. Some Motives and Incentives to the Love of God. 1665. Disquisition about the Final Causes of Natural Things. 1688. Occasional Reflections. 1675. Of the High Veneration Man's Intellect owes to God. 1711, etc.

Lardner. Credibility of the Gospel History. 4 vols. 1727–1757. *Collection of Jewish and Heathen Testimonies.* 1764–7.

Conybeare. Defence of Revelation. 1732.

Stackhouse. Truth of the Christian Religion. 1733.

Locke (John). Reasonableness of Christianity. 1733. Discourse of Miracles.

Browne (Simeon). Defence of the Religion of Nature and the Christian Revelation in reply to Tindal. 8vo. 1732.

Browne (Peter). Things Divine and Human conceived of by Analogy. 1733.

Calamy (Dr. Edmund). The Inspiration of the Holy Writings of the Old and New Testaments considered and improved. 8vo. 1710.

Smallbrooke (Richard, D.D., Bishop of St. Davids). Vindication of the Miracles of our blessed Saviour (examination of Woolston). 8vo. 1729.

Leslie (Charles). Short Method with the Deists. 1722.

Clarke (Dr. Samuel). *Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God, in answer to Hobbes, Spinoza, etc.* 1725. *Discourse concerning the Unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion and the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Revelation.* 1725.

Sherlock (Dr.). Trial of the Witnesses. Discourses on Prophecy, etc. 5 vols. Edition 1830.

Chandler (Bishop). Defence of Christianity from the Prophecies of the Old Testament, etc. 1725. Vindication of the Defence. 2 vols. 1728.

Foster (Dr.). Usefulness, Truth, and Excellency of the Christian Religion, against Tindal. 8vo. 1721.

Horsley (Bishop). On the Prophecies of the Messiah dispersed among the Heathen. Sermons. 4 vols. (Vol. iv.).

Jortin (Dr.). Discourses concerning the Truth of the Christian Religion.

Warburton (Bishop). Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated. Julian.

West (Gilbert, LL.D.). Observations on the History and Evidences of the Resurrection of Christ. 8vo. 1747.

Ostervald (J. F.). Grounds and Principles of the Christian Religion explained. From the French. 12mo. 1732.

Lyttelton (George, Lord). Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul.

Jenkin (Robert, D.D., Master of St. John's College, Cambridge). The Reasonableness and Certainty of the Christian Religion. 2 vols., 8vo. 1721.

Stillingfleet (Bishop J.). Origines Sacræ ; or, a Rational Account of the Grounds of Natural and Revealed Religion. 2 vols., 8vo. Oxford, 1797.

Lefaure (Philip, D.D.). Letters of certain Jews to M. De Voltaire ; containing an Apology for their own People and for the Old Testament. Translated with Critical Reflections. 2 vols., 8vo. Dublin, 1777.

Campbell. A Dissertation on Miracles, in answer to Hume.

Kirtholt. Paganus Obtrectator. 1703.

Fleetwood (Wm., D.D., Bishop of Ely). Essay upon Miracles. 8vo. 1701.

Delany (Dean). Revelation Examined. 2 vols., 8vo. 1733.

Leland (Dr. John). *Advantage and Necessity of the Christian Revelation, with a Preliminary Discourse on Natural and Revealed Religion.* 2 vols. 1768. *View of the Principal Deistical Writers, etc.* 2 vols., 8vo. 1808.

Watson (Bishop). Apology for the Bible, in reply to Paine's Age of Reason. 1796.

Berkeley (Bishop). Alciphron ; or, the Minute Philosopher, containing an Apology for the Christian Religion. 1767.

Butler (Bishop). *Analogy of Religion*, etc.

Taylor (Rev. H.). Apology of Benjamin Ben Mordecai for embracing Christianity. With notes. 2 vols. 1784.

Oswald (Dr. James). Appeal to Common Sense in behalf of Religion. 2 vols. 1768–72.

Derham (Dr. W.). Astro-theology ; or, a Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God from a Survey of the Heavens. 1767. Physico-theology ; or, a Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God from His Works of Creation. 2 vols. 1798.

Knox (Dr. Vicesimus). Christian Philosophy. 1796.

Addison (Joseph). Of the Christian Religion. Misc. Works, vol. iii.

Doddridge (Dr. Philip). Christianity founded on Argument. On the Inspiration of the New Testament. Works, vols. i. and iv.

Priestley (Rev. Joseph). Comparison of the Institutions of Moses with those of the Hindoos and other Ancient Nations, etc. 1799.

Swift (Dr. Jonathan). Tracts in Defence of Christianity. Works, 8vo., vol. viii.

Bryant (Jacob). On the Authenticity of the Scriptures and the Truth of the Christian Religion. 8vo. Camb., 1793.

Duncan (Dr. John). Libertine and Infidel led to Reflection by Calm Expostulation. 8vo. 1799.

Gisborne (Rev. Thos., M.A.). Familiar Survey of the Christian Religion and of History, as connected with the Introduction and Progress of Christianity, intended primarily for the use of young persons. 8vo. 1799. Testimony of Natural Theology to Christianity. 12mo. 1818.

Beattie (Dr. James). Evidences of the Christian Religion briefly and plainly stated. 2 vols. 1786.

Bonnet (Charles). Inquiries (Philosophical and Critical) concerning Christianity. Translated from the French by J. L. Boissier. 8vo. 1791.

Ogilvie (Dr. John). Inquiry into the Causes of the Infidelity and Scepticism of the Times, with Occasional Observations on the writings of Herbert, Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke, Hume, Gibbon, Toulmin, etc. 8vo. 1783.

Gregory (Olinthus, LL.D.). Letters to a Friend on the Evidences, Doctrines, and Duties of the Christian Religion. 2 vols., 8vo. 1812.

Prideaux (Humphrey, D.D.). Life of Mahomet. Letter to Deists. 8vo.

Young (Rev. Ed., LL.D.). Vindication of Providence; or, a True Estimate of Human Life. 12mo. Works, vol. vi.

Gurney (J. J.). Essays on the Evidences, Doctrines, and Practical Operation of Christianity. Post 8vo. 1831.

Ray (Rev. John, F.R.S.). Wisdom of God manifested in the Works of the Creation. 8vo. 1743.

Ireland (Dr. John). Paganism and Christianity compared. Lectures. 1809.

Keith (Rev. Alex., D.D.). *Demonstration of the Truth of the Christian Religion.* 8vo. 1838. *Evidence of the Truth of the Christian Religion, derived from the Literal Fulfilment of Prophecy, particularly as Illustrated by the History of the Jews, and by the Discoveries of Recent Travellers.* 12mo. 1835. Best edition, 1859.

Jukes (Rev. Andrew). Enquiry into the Principles of Prophetic Interpretation, and the Practical Results arising from them. Hulsean Prize Essay, 1840. 12mo. 1841.

Birks (Rev. T. R.). Horæ Apostolicæ. Scripture Doctrine of Creation (S.P.C.K.). Horæ Evangelicæ; or, the Internal Evidence of the Gospel History, being an Inquiry into the Structure and Origin of the Four Gospels, their Historical Consistency and the Characteristic Design of each Narrative. 1852. Lectures on Modern Rationalism and Inspiration. 1853. The Bible and Modern Thought. 1863. 8vo. The Exodus of Israel—in reply to Colenso. 1863. The Pentateuch and its Anatomists. 1869.

Tate (Rev. James, M.A.). Horæ Paulinæ of William Paley, D.D., Carried Out and Illustrated in a Continuous History of the Apostolic Labours and Writings of St. Paul on the basis of the Acts. 8vo. 1840.

Gaussen (L.). Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. From the French. 8vo. 1841. The Canon of Scripture from the Double Point of View of Science and Faith. 8vo. 1863.

Bickersteth (Rev. Ed.). Practical Guide to the Prophecies, with reference

to their Interpretation and Fulfilment, and to Personal Edification. 12mo. 1835.

Porter (Rev. J. Scott). Principles of Textual Criticism, with their Application to the Old and New Testaments. Illustrated. 8vo. 1848.

Norton (Andrew). The Evidences of the Genuineness of the Gospels. 2 vols., 8vo. 1847.

Smith (James, of Jordan Hill, F.R.S.). Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul, with Dissertations on the Sources of the Writings of St. Luke, and the Ships and Navigation of the Ancients. 8vo. 1848.

Burnside (Robert). Religion of Mankind, in a Series of Essays. 2 vols. 1819.

Kerns (Thomas, M.D.). Arcana of Nature Revealed; or, Proofs of the Being and Attributes of God elicited in a Brief Survey of the Works of God. 2 vols., 12mo. 1839.

Stebbing (Henry, D.D.). A Defence of Dr. Clarke's Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion. 8vo. 1731.

Rennell (Rev. Thomas). Remarks on Scepticism, especially as to Organization and Life. 1819.

Law (Rev. William, M.A.). The Case of Reason; or, Natural Religion Fairly and Fully Stated. 8vo. 1731.

Bingham (Thomas). Triumph of Truth in the Testimony of its Foes. 12mo. Cambridge, 1800.

Broughton (Thos., M.A., Reader at the Temple). Christianity distinct from the Religion of Nature, in three parts, by Philaleutherus Christianus. 8vo. 1732.

Sumner (T. Bird). On the Records of Creation, etc. 2 vols. 1816.

Edwards (Henry, D.D., LL.D.). Illustrations of the Wisdom and Benevolence of the Deity. 12mo. 1845.

Whewell (Rev. W., D.D.). *Indications of the Creator, Extracts bearing upon Theology from the History and Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences.* 8vo. 1845.

McCosh (Rev. Dr. James). *Method of the Divine Government, Physical and Moral.* 8vo. 1850. *Christianity and Positivism, a Series of Lectures to the Times on Natural Theology and Apologetics.* Post 8vo. 1871. *Intuitions of the Mind Inductively Investigated.* 8vo. 1868.

Pye Smith (Rev. Dr., F.R.S.). *On the Relation between the Holy Scriptures and Some Parts of Geological Science.* 8vo. 1840.

Brougham (Lord). *Dissertations on Subjects of Science connected with Natural Theology.* 2 vols., 8vo. 1839. *Notes on Paley's Natural Theology with those of Sir Charles Bell.* (*Paley.*) 2 vols., 8vo. 1836.

Spalding (Samuel, M.A.). Philosophy of Christian Morals. 8vo. 1843.

Taylor (Isaac). Physical Theory of Another Life. 8vo. 1836. *Pro-*

gress of Historical Proof. 8vo. 1828. *Restoration of Belief, a Series of Essays in 3 parts.* 12mo. 1852.

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